

Hafa Adai!

Propst lauds Corrections' Torres. **PAGE 2**

Court rules in favor of DOF in fired firefighters' premium pay lawsuit. **PAGE 4**

\$1

# Saipan Tribune

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KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The CNMI Drug Court program held its very first summit yesterday to update partners on the ever-changing world of addiction and how best to help members of the CNMI community who are suffering from the disease.

## CNMI Drug Court hosts first summit

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
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REPORTER

The CNMI Drug Court program held its first summit yesterday to update partners on the

ever-changing world of addiction and how best to help members of the CNMI community who are suffering from the disease.

Members of the CNMI Drug

See **SUMMIT** on Page 4

10 DAYS  
before  
CHRISTMAS

## Senator stresses need to get finality on EVS-TAP

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
[ferdie\\_delatorre@saipantribune.com](mailto:ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) finds it concerning to see the totally contrasting opinions between the Palacios administration and the CNMI's business sector about the China tourist market, saying there appears to be a "disconnect."

» **Chamber's Guerrero says EVS-TAP very important tool for national security for CNMI**



Hofschneider

He cited Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' reiteration about the CNMI pivoting away from tourists from the People's Republic of China, in contrast to entities like the Hotel Association of the NMI and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce that have been very open publicly that the CNMI

See **SENATOR** on Page 4

## HANMI occupancy at 43% in Oct. 2023

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported a 43% average occupancy rate among its 11 member hotels for October 2023 and a 38% average occupancy rate this calendar year-to-date.

A total of 27,918 of 62,619 available room nights sold during October 2023. Average

room rates were \$143.61, and the average room rate is \$144.72 year-to-date.

"At 43% average occupancy, HANMI member hotels are still well below the industry rate for profitability, which is about 80%," said HANMI acting chairman Dennis Seo. "The pandemic is no longer a factor in visitor

arrivals. We want to keep local workers employed and businesses open, we must find a third source market beside Korea and Japan. This would be the best way to revive our tourism economy and generate revenue and jobs."

Hotels included in HANMI  
See **HANMI** on Page 4

## Camacho directed to recuse self from sexual assault case

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
[kimberly\\_esmores@saipantribune.com](mailto:kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

The Supreme Court has ordered Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho to recuse him-

self from hearing a "he-said, she-said" sexual assault case between two Superior Court employees and directs the Superior Court to reassign the case to another judge

Supreme Court Justices John A. Manglona and Perry B. Inos ruled yesterday in favor of William Abraczinskas, a former Superior Court law clerk, granting his petition for a writ

of mandamus and prohibition that essentially disqualifies all Superior Court judges from handling his case and ordering the appointment of a judge pro

See **CAMACHO** on Page 4

### INSIDE



#### BUSINESS

Due to popular demand, Hyatt Regency Saipan has extended its \$140 local rate promo until Jan. 2, 2024.

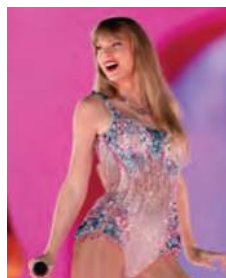
**PAGE 16**



#### OFFBEAT

Throngs of people dressed as jolly Old St. Nick descended on New York City for the annual SantaCon charity pub crawl on Saturday.

**PAGE 17**



#### LIFE & STYLE

A state House of Representatives resolution is recognizing 2023 as the Taylor Swift era in her home state of Pennsylvania.

**PAGE 18**



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# Local

## Propst lauds Corrections' Torres



» But sees 'brutal' comments about proposal to host Guam inmates

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), second row, extreme left, talks about the proposal of Corrections Commissioner Anthony Torres for DOC to house Guam prisoners during a House of Representatives session yesterday.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) welcomes the community's feedback on the proposal of the Department of Corrections to house some Guam inmates as a means to generate money for the Commonwealth and urged to community to look at the proposal first before jumping all over it.

Speaking during the miscellaneous portion of the House of Representatives session yesterday, he said he has seen a lot of negative comments, including some that he described as "pretty brutal," about the proposal of bring in prisoners from Guam to the Department of Corrections on Saipan.

Propst stated that it's always good to get feedback from the community, but that what he truly appreciates is having a DOC commissioner who is thinking outside the box. He said Commissioner Anthony Torres is looking at ways to help not just DOC but the entire Commonwealth, and that includes the inmates.

"We all know that funding is serious problem here in the Commonwealth. We are all hurting. Each and every one of us," Propst said.

He thanked some lawmakers who joined the meeting with Torres and an assistant attorney general, as counsel for DOC, last Wednesday, and that there were some concerns that

were raised by constituents.

He said they asked questions and Torres was upfront and was very open about his ideas and goals.

One of the biggest fears, Propst said, was that all these prisoners coming from Guam are going to all be released on Saipan, which is going to drive up crimes. He said Torres replied that he would never allow such a release here that under his watch.

Propst said the commissioner discussed the proposal during the meeting "very openly, very calmly, and very rationally."

"I was just very impressed that we had colleagues from all sides of the aisle, you know, that were there to attend and listen to what he had to say," he said.

Propst said the CNMI is facing a huge revenue shortfall as the economy is struggling, but there are a lot of solutions being offered. All he's asking for, he said, is for people to examine the proposed solutions first before slamming every single thing.

Propst said he is not saying that Torres' proposal is perfect or flawless, but he understands the merits. He said he does understand how it could financially help the Commonwealth and DOC.

Guam Department of Corrections officials visited the CNMI recently to discuss plans to house Guam inmates on Saipan to alleviate its overcrowding problem.



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# \$10K bail for DOC officer who's accused of running over woman

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

The CNMI Superior Court imposed last Wednesday a \$10,000 cash bail on a Department of Corrections officer who was arrested after allegedly running over a woman's leg with a car.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed a \$10,000 cash bail on Jessme Jones Martin, 22, who is facing charges of assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Camacho ordered Martin to return to court on Dec. 20 for a preliminary hearing while her arraignment was set for Jan. 8.

According to court documents, the incident happened back on Nov. 6 but an arrest warrant for Martin was only issued yesterday. Court docu-

ments did not clarify why.

The complaint against Martin states that police responded at around 4:18pm on Nov. 6 to a disturbing the peace call at a residence in Kagman, where they met four women, one of them being Martin.

Police noted that one of the women, later identified as Camille Torres, claimed that Martin hit her with her car.

Torres, in an interview with police, said she and Martin's husband, Nicko Martin, were earlier inside the residence when they heard shouting and things being thrown around.

Torres said it was Jessme Martin who was outside the house and she was trying to kick the door open.

Torres said Nicko Martin later opened the door and tried to hold on to Jessme Martin as Torres tried to run out of the house; however, she claims

that Jessme Martin and two other women charged at her and began beating her.

While she was on the ground, Torres claims Martin got into her car and ran over her left leg.

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# Palacios renominated Sablan and Santos to the MPLT board

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has renominated former Education commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan and former Commonwealth Casino Commission member Alvaro A. Santos to serve as members of the Marianas Public Land Trust board of trustees.

If confirmed by the Senate, Sablan and Santos will serve six-year terms expiring on Jan. 9, 2030. Sablan will represent Saipan and the women's sector, while Santos will represent Saipan.

Palacios informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) last week that he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang have complete confidence in Sablan's and Santos' ability to devote their time and efforts to the best interests of the people.

The governor said they be-

lieve that Sablan's and Santos' continued membership on the MPLT board is essential to ensure consistency and continuity in fulfilling the MPLT's goals and objectives.

Oscar M. Babauta, who is the special assistant for the Palacios-Apatang administration, said yesterday that Sablan and Santos were renominated because they were filling up vacancies of prior MPLT board members.

Last April, Palacios appointed Sablan to the MPLT board to serve the remaining term vacated by Maria Frica T. Pangelinan.

Last April, Palacios also appointed Santos to the MPLT board to serve the remainder of Martin B. Ada's term. Santos used to serve a few years ago as MPLT board chair.

The Senate subsequently confirmed the nomination of Sablan and Palacios that same month.



Sablan

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# Court rules in favor of DOF in fired firefighters' premium pay lawsuit

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Superior Court has granted in part the Department of Finance's motion to dismiss the lawsuit filed by the nine terminated firefighters who are suing Finance over COVID-19 premium pay.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja granted in part Finance's motion to dismiss the lawsuit, where the firefighters are suing the department for only awarding them \$1,000 in premium pay instead of \$5,000.

Specifically, Naraja granted Finance's motion to dismiss the first cause of action for judicial review of an administrative action; and the

third cause of action for civil rights violation. However, the court allowed the former firefighters, represented by Joseph Horey, to file a second amended complaint by Dec. 26, 2023.

A second amended complaint should specifically allege facts supporting an inference of jurisdiction under the Commonwealth Administrative Procedures Act, Naraja said.

"The plaintiffs' equal protection claim is sufficiently pleaded to overcome the presumption of rationality and move forward with litigation. Based on the criteria for receiving premium pay, the plaintiffs qualified for \$5,000 premium pay," the court said.

The nine terminated firefighters are Paul T. Acebedo, Jose K. Angui, Allen T. Calvo, Cain C. Castro, Argernon A. Flores, Derek B. Gersonde, Shawn DLR Kaipat, Philip Kalen, and Adam J. Safer. Through Horey, they filed a complaint of injunctive relief against then-Secretary of Finance David DLG Atalig, and DOF.

Last year, the nine asked the Superior Court to issue an order directing Secretary of Finance Tracy Norita to approve and disburse \$5,000 in premium pay to each of them.

According to the lawsuit, on or about Dec. 29, 2021, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced that the Department of Finance would release

\$5,000 premium pay for each CNMI government employee who had worked at least 40 hours to directly mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services employees, the plaintiffs said they had worked at least 40 hours to directly mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each of the plaintiffs filled out, and submitted to the Department of Finance their applications for premium pay. However, the lawsuit alleges that, although each of the plaintiffs met all the qualifications for premium pay, the defendant only approved premium pay for each of them in the amount of \$1,000, rather than the full \$5,000.

The plaintiffs also claimed

that the reason they were paid less than full premium pay was that they had been terminated from their government employment on or about May 21, 2021, after they had already performed the amount of direct pandemic mitigation work required

to qualify for full premium payment.

The ex-firefighters were terminated because of their refusal to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine. They have a pending lawsuit requesting the court to reinstate them as firefighters.

## SENATOR

From page 1

needs Chinese tourists.

Hofschneider also noted that both the Commonwealth Ports Authority and the Marianas Visitors Authority have cited the need to have Chinese tourists to revitalize the tourism industry.

"So whether there is a disconnect, or there's a misconception of the narrative coming from the administration, I don't know," said the senator during the Senate meeting on Wednesday with HANMI and Chamber officials.

Hofschneider underscored the need to escalate the process so they can finalize what the CNMI's course of action would be, whether the administration is going to develop the CNMI-Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program, or EVS-TAP, or they are going to mirror the call by some members of the U.S. Congress to just get rid of the discretionary parole program for Chinese tourists.

That program allows Chinese tourists to enter the CNMI without a tourist visa.

The proposed EVS-TAP will allow prescreened PRC nationals to travel to the CNMI without a visa under specific conditions.

Hofschneider said that when HANMI and the Chamber are crying for help, government leaders should be attentive to their plight because the CNMI relies on business activities.

That means that if the businesses are not succeeding in their operations, that also means an inability to remit their Business Gross Revenue Tax to the Department of Finance, Hofschneider said.

He called on the Senate to hasten the process of action on Senate Joint Resolution 23-07, which he filed, which asks Palacios to advocate for the increased security for the tourism industry through the promulgation of the EVS-TAP.

EVS-TAP was one of the recommendations of 902 Consultation special representatives in their report dated May 15, 2019 to then-president Donald Trump.

Hofschneider hopes the House of Representatives will also support the resolution.

Hofschneider said the Legislature should get together in concert with HANMI, the Chamber, CPA, and MVA to come up with one voice as to what course of action they want to take.

Hofschneider said their mission is to work with HANMI and the Chamber to build the capacity of diversifying the CNMI's tourism industry.

As for concerns about illegal immigrants who sail from the CNMI to Guam, Hofschneider suggests removing the Commonwealth-Only Transitional Worker visas for PRC nationals and just have the EVS-TAP for them. He said that's probably part of the negotiation to the new regulations.

Hofschneider said the CNMI is trying to get back on track with the economy, but there's also a push for tax increases from some members of the legislature.

"And I don't know how that's [going to] work in a very volatile situation. So I cannot overemphasize and underscore the need to get finality on this EVS-TAP solution option," he added.

In response to Hofschneider's question, Chamber president Joe C. Guerrero said they have been trying to talk with the administration about EVS-TAP.

Echoing Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), Guerrero said they want to work together as it's not about politics, but about the CNMI's people, "that it pains me to see my own relatives suffer because they can't get a job, or their hours are about to get cut, or get cut."

Guerrero said this is affecting everybody, especially the silent voices that the Chamber represents, yet the EVS-TAP is very important tool for national security for the CNMI.

He said the travel agencies will make sure that PRC nationals that visit are indeed tourists and they will get back on the plane within 14 days. Guerrero said it's quite doable and can create a safe environment for everyone.

He said they had been advised several years ago when a study was made about the EVS-TAP that it will cost a little over \$4 million for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to implement this electronically in their software systems.

## SUMMIT

From page 1

Court program and Superior Court, first responders, and treatment providers gathered yesterday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan for the CNMI's first Drug Court summit.

Drug Court Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio said in an interview that the Drug Court Summit is important because it helps by continuing to engage community partners, so they understand the process of the Drug Court and also to update best practice standards so that the program continues to operate efficiently.

"When we think about drugs, we think cocaine or methamphetamine, but when we talk about addiction, it's not actually the same thing. There are some people who may have gotten into an accident or sport injury and had to start taking pain killers and that becomes an addiction, and their drug of choice is pills being given by doctors and they eventually spiral and the

closest thing to pills is usually heroine, so they turn to that. This is why this summit is important. I just came back from a training for drug court judges, and it amazes me that, although I've been doing this for seven years, every time I go, I learn something new to update our skills and best practice standards," she said.

Kim-Tenorio shared some of the things that will be brought to light is some of the Drug Court's major challenges. Right now, it is the lack of treatment professionals.

"We are gaining more, but we are still lacking treatment professionals. The thing is, the more you learn, the more you realize things. So we are learning that the community we treat perhaps has more needs than we realized so we're trying to respond to that need and, of course, the biggest pressure is on our treatment providers," she said.

In the last seven years of running the program, Kim-Tenorio said they've realized that there is a big population afflicted with addiction and it's critical that their needs are met.

"From my end, the reason we have participants is because they committed a crime but obviously there is a bigger population inflicted with addiction. They're not necessarily all coming through the Drug Court. Some of them are in family court, some of them are on probation, some are in the federal system, or some are just walk-ins and so forth. So, meeting all their needs and understanding their needs is crucial and our treatment providers are at the forefront of that. They really are the heart of our program. I always thank them for everything they do because the challenges they face are huge and they continue to educate themselves, update their skills so they can give the best services to our participants," she said.

Since the Drug Court program was launched in 2016, nearly 150 individuals have gone through the program, Kim-Tenorio said.

"Dec. 16, 2016, was when we had our first Drug Court hearing so we are completing seven years and heading into our eighth year two days from

now. We started out with eight during our first hearing. I think we're well over 130, even near 150 participants. Next graduation will be in the next couple of months. There's currently about 30 in the program with a handful on the waitlist waiting to be assessed," she said.

## HANMI

From page 1

MI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kanoa Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, Saipan World Resort, Surfrider Resort Hotel, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of The Marianas. HANMI also makes regular charitable donations to support non-profit organizations and tourism-related government projects. **(HANMI)**

that all Superior Court judges should recuse themselves because the case involves two court employees.

Abraczinskas argued that the Commonwealth Code requires that a judge recuses when a reasonable person would find that the judge's continued presence over the case would create the appearance of impropriety.

"The Supreme Court emphasized the extraordinary and unique circumstances of the case. Though judges may typically decide on their own recusal, the court found that this issue presents new and important problems, justifying this extraordinary type of relief," a press release from the Supreme Court states.

error by failing to grant petitioner's motion for disqualification under 3308(a). Petitioner has no adequate means of obtaining the desired relief because he risks damage or prejudice in a way not correctable on appeal. While the error is not one that is oft-repeated or manifests a persistent disregard for the rules, it does raise new and important problems and issues of first impression. For the foregoing reasons, Abraczinskas' petition for writ of mandamus is granted, and the Superior Court's order denying the motion for disqualification is vacated. The Superior Court shall reassign Abraczinskas' case to another judge," states the order.

Abraczinskas had argued

## CAMACHO

From page 1

tempore instead.

Specifically, by issuing this writ of mandamus, the Supreme Court orders Camacho's recusal from this case.

The high court order explained that even though a motion to disqualify all five judges is overbroad, Camacho, at least, must recuse himself due to the appearance of impropriety that comes from a judge of the Superior Court presiding over a case involving two Superior Court employees.

"This opinion vacates the lower court's denial of a motion to disqualify all judges of the Superior Court. [Cama-

cho] must recuse himself from presiding over a case involving two employees of the Superior Court," said the order.

Abraczinskas is being accused of sexually assaulting his co-worker but he claims he was the one who was sexually assaulted and that he had filed a complaint with the CNMI Judiciary's Human Resources prior to the rape complaint being filed against him.

According to the Supreme Court order, the Superior Court committed clear error by failing to grant the petitioner's motion for disqualification.

"The balance of the Tenorio factors weighs in favor of granting mandamus. The Superior Court committed clear





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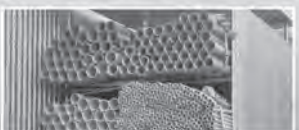


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# Bridge Capital's CNMI Got Talent set for tomorrow

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**  
chrystal\_marino@saipantribune.com  
CORRESPONDENT

Tomorrow night marks the return of the one of the community's favorite holiday events, Bridge Capital's Annual CNMI's Got Talent show, which is set to take place this year at the Kensington Hotel Saipan in San Roque.

The invitation-only event will feature a range of performances from special guests to the chosen contestants, culminating in the announcement of the winners. Contestants will check into the event between 4:30pm and 5:45pm for the

show, which begins at 6pm.

In the kids and adult categories, the grand prize winners will receive \$2,000; first runners up winners will get \$1,500; and second runners up will get \$1,000 each. The "Most Christmas" award and the "Governor's Choice" award will also be given; that comes with a \$1,500 cash award each. Awards will also be presented for the "Best in Tinian" and the "Best in Rota" performances.

Bridge Capital vice president Bart Jackson said they are quite excited for the event. He said they initially had over 20



CHRYSTAL MARINO

The "Most Christmas" award and the first place prize in the adult category went to dancing duo Cookies and Cream at Bridge Capital's 12th edition of the CNMI's Got Talent last year. Cookies and Cream's Cire Durano and Joel Balagon are seen here posing with Bridge Capital LLC's Shawn Scott and John Baldwin last year.

audition tapes that were submitted by the original deadline, but due to more individuals calling in and saying that they were nearly done with their auditions, Bridge Capital decided to extend the deadline to Nov. 22.

Jackson looks forward to a great show, adding that, with the bigger venue at Kensington, the stage space will really give performers the opportunity to showcase their talents.

He acknowledged that they had done the CNMI's Got Talent show at Pacific Islands Club Saipan for many years and that they have a very good relationship with the resort as well as many other hotels, but the primary consideration was a big performing stage.

With the new venue at Kensington, he said, the stage area gives more space for performers to show off their talent.

"It's something we're really looking forward to," he said.

He noted the variety of performances he's watched throughout the years and when he sees performers and contestants continue to develop and perform inside and outside the show, it brings him fulfillment. "It's really fulfilling. You get a really warm feeling, knowing you played a part in that," he added.

He said this is what Bridge Capital wants to do—being involved in the creative arts here in the Marianas to provide opportunities for all types of performers to showcase their talent.

"We believe in supporting the arts and in a small place that's always looking for funding, artists are not always at the top of the list, and so we think it's important to try and do our part to monetarily support and give people an opportunity and spaces to show their art, whatever it may be. That's one of the things that Bridge Capital really likes to do," Jackson said.

They also wanted to extend that opportunity to Tinian and Rota this year. "We like be supportive and we love to do whatever we can to help those folks [on] Tinian and Rota who don't have the same opportunities as the folks here [on] Saipan," he said, adding that there is so much talent in the CNMI and Bridge Capital wants to showcase that.

His favorite part of the show is seeing new performers. "I love it when I see someone who hasn't come in before come in and do well." Also, "I really enjoy seeing a performer who competed before and didn't win but now they've been practicing and honing their craft on their instrument or their voice and getting more skilled at their craft. I really enjoy seeing that."

**Accepting Entries Now!**

*Hafa Adai!*  
**Saipan Tribune**

## What I Wish for Christmas Drawing Contest

**OPEN TO KIDS AGES 6 TO 12**

**Deadline of Submission:**  
December 19, 2023

**Dimensions:**  
8.5in x 11in to 11in x 17in

**Mediums:**  
Watercolor, Poster Color, Acrylic,  
Crayons & Color Pencils.  
No computer generated artwork allowed.

*Draw what you  
wish for Christmas  
and tell us why.  
Add a short description in your  
drawing as to what is your  
Christmas wish and why.*

*Artworks must be  
original and must be  
Christmas themed.  
Winners will  
get special gifts!*

**Please submit entries to  
Saipan Tribune**  
JP Center, Beach Road Garapan  
M-F at 8am - 6:00pm.  
For more information, please email  
sales@saipantribune.com  
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## USCIS reaches fiscal year 2024 H-1B cap

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach the congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa regular cap and the 20,000 H-1B visa U.S. advanced degree exemption,

known as the master's cap, for fiscal year 2024.

According to a USCIS news release yesterday, it said it will send non-selection notices to registrants through their online accounts over the next few days.

"When we finish sending these non-selection notifications, the status for properly submitted registrations that we did not select for the [fiscal year] 2024 H-1B numerical allocations will show: Not Selected: Not selected—not

eligible to file an H-1B cap petition based on this registration," it said.

USCIS said it will continue to accept and process petitions that are otherwise exempt from the cap. Petitions filed for current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap, and who still retain their cap number, are

exempt from the fiscal year 2024 H-1B cap.

USCIS will continue to accept and process petitions filed to:

- Extend the amount of time a current H-1B worker may remain in the United States;

- Change the terms of employment for current

H-1B workers;

- Allow current H-1B workers to change employers; and

- Allow current H-1B workers to work concurrently in additional H-1B positions.

U.S. businesses use the H-1B program to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations. (USCIS)

## Holiday Art Bazaar at the Koblerville tomorrow

The Holiday Art Bazaar will be held at the Koblerville Youth Center tomorrow, Dec. 16. The event is expected to bring together a diverse array of talented local artists and craftspeople.

The event promises a vibrant showcase of unique creations from skilled artisans, offering a one-of-a-kind shopping experience for holiday gifts and decor. Attendees can explore an eclectic mix of

handmade products, ranging from wood and macramé to crochet goods, jewelry, and more. It also has some food vendors present that day, so stop in for lunch.

Among the featured vendors are the following:

- Seasoned with Hafa Adai — wood products/macrame

- PIKA Tinian — Tinian hot pepper products

- Uchanesti — crochet

goods, hats, clothing, and accessories

- Lvndr.Krafts — handmade crochet items

- Nais Creations — handmade jewelry and plants

- Baskets and Bayogu — handcrafted items

- ChiKoThai Krafts — handcrafted items

- Christmas Craft Decorations — handcrafted items

- Islandry670 Handmade — Handmade necklace and

earrings, polymer clay, and resin

- Cherrymoon Co. — macramé art and decorations

- Tahine's Creations — island-made handicrafts, jewelry, and bags

- Inspire Micronesia — Stone and shell carving

- Aofia's Cultural Designs — mwars, hair flowers, accessories, lava, CNMI purses, etc.

- Banidosu Shells — spondylous and sinahi jewelry

- Toki Mojica — shell jewelry and woven crafts from Micronesia

- Designer Wreath and Company — holiday wreaths and decor

- Tylers Gelatte Stone — desert and burgers

- Island Snow — snacks, snow cone, cotton dandy, popcorn, nachos, hotdogs, snacks

- Chelu Shave Ice — snacks and shave ice

Rep. Diego Camacho (D-Saipan) encourages the community to come together and support these local talents. The Holiday Art Bazaar pro-

vides a wonderful opportunity to discover unique and meaningful gifts while celebrating the rich artistic heritage of the CNMI. For parent's convenience, there will be a children's card crafting table, manned by students from

Saipan Southern High School and Kagman High School Rotary Interact Clubs.


At the same time, there will be a multifamily style swap-meet or garage sale on the outside of the Koblerville Youth Center. (PR)




### REST ASSURED, IT'S CHRISTMAS

"Art by Marianas High School student Katrina Wu from the Pacifica Insurance Underwriters 10th Annual Pacifica Art Contest (PAC) held in October this year. This year's theme: Rest assured, it's Christmas. Check out Pacifica's new online art exhibition THE PAC GALLERY on [www.pacificains.com/artcontest](http://www.pacificains.com/artcontest)."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## PROCUREMENT SERVICES CNMI GOVERNMENT



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RFP24-DCCA/CCDF-42400013

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 03, 2024 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

## “CNMI Early Childhood Workforce Registry”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE  
MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL  
(<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG  
NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING  
REGULAR WORKING HOURS.


**QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE  
DEPARMENT OF COMMUNITRY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS BY  
DECEMBER 29, 2023, TO MRS. ESTER WABOL VIA EMAIL AT  
[ewabol.ccdf@childcare.gov.mp](mailto:ewabol.ccdf@childcare.gov.mp)

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT  
REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND  
70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND  
CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**


THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT  
ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE  
IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST  
INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ VIVIAN T. SABLAN**  
ACTING SECRETARY, DCCA

**/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS



## UNITED STATES Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



# NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on  
Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its  
3rd Quarter General Membership Meeting on December 18, 2023,  
from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at Kensington Hotel – Queen's Hall

## AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Roll Call**
- III. **Review & Adoption of the Agenda of December 18, 2023**
- IV. **Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of July 31, 2023**
- V. **New Business**
  - a. Office of the Public Auditor Ethic Presentation
  - b. International Day for Persons with Disabilities – December 5, 2023
  - c. Family Transition Symposium – January 2024
  - d. Fundamentals of Caregiving Training
  - e. American Sign Language Training
  - f. March 2024 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
- VI. **Action Item**
  - a. Ratify the Approval of the DD Basic Grant Partial Allotment Budget
  - b. Ratify the Approval of the CNMI Assistive Technology Grant Partial Allotment Budget
- VII. **Old Business**
  - a. AS UCEDD Technical Assistance Update
  - b. CNMI Walkability Action Institute Update
  - c. CNMI Disability Sport Festival Update
  - d. September 2023 – Emergency Preparedness Month Update
- VIII. **Reports**
  - a. Chairperson
  - b. State Plan Committee Chairperson
  - c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson
  - d. Executive Director
- IX. **Miscellaneous**
- X. **Next Meeting**
- XI. **Adjournment**

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

**/s/ Concepcion Ulloa**  
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total \$274,744 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



# BOG's Holiday Give donates \$20K to 4 non-profits

**HAGATNA, Guam**—As an extension of Giving Tuesday and part of their Give A Little Love holiday campaign, Bank of Guam proudly announces a total donation of \$20,000 to four deserving non-profit organizations.

The Holiday Give by Bank of Guam is an employee-driven initiative, empowering the Bank of Guam familia to contribute to the community they serve. This year, each selected non-prof-

it will receive \$5,000 to support their invaluable work.

The selected non-profits for this year's Holiday Give are:

■ **Bake Their Day:** Making smiles one cake at a time, Bake Their Day creates birthday cakes for children and young adults in shelters, foster and group homes, and government agencies.

■ **Chuuk Women's Council:** Established almost 40 years ago, it advocates for gender equality and run-

ning programs focused on health, education, and environmental issues.

■ **Guam Animals In Need: GAIN,** located in Yigo, provides shelter, food, medi-

cal attention, and a nurturing environment for animals, working toward creating a safer and more compassionate world for them.

■ **Harvest House:** Since

2009, Harvest House has been helping children and teens on Guam grow physically,

Bank of Guam's Holiday Give, established in 2017, aims to spread cheer and support during the Christmas season. The bank's employees actively participate by nominating

and voting for non-profits that connect with them personally and exemplify dedication to the community.

"As The People's Bank, community is at the heart of everything we do. And in the spirit of the season together

*See BOG on Page 13*



BOG Bank of Guam presents the Chuuk Women's Council with a \$5,000 donation as part of their annual Holiday Give. Pictured (sitting from left) Yosko Kim, board treasurer, Chuuk Women's Council; Joanne Akinaga, assistant vice president and Chuuk branch manager, Bank of Guam; and Catherina Nachu, board member, Chuuk Women's Council; and (standing from left) Alicia Samuel, CSA, Bank of Guam; and Nepeu Chen Aunuwa, administrative officer, Chuuk Women's Council.



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
**HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD**  
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court  
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950  
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814  
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp • Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

- Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) hereby gives notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 8 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.
- AGENDA**
- I. Meeting Call to Order
  - II. Determination of Quorum
  - III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
  - IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/22/2023)
  - V. Public Comments
  - VI. Chairperson's Report
    - Upcoming Vacancy on the Board
  - VII. Director's Report
  - VIII. Investigator's Report
  - IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
    - A. Governor's Office
    - B. Legislature
    - X. Old Business
  - XI. New Business
  - XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
    - A. New Application
    - B. Renewal Application
  - XIII. Miscellaneous Business
    - Upcoming National Boards Annual Meetings for 2024
    - 2024 FSMB Annual Conference Invitation
    - PsyPact Commission Order
  - XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
    - Five applications for discussions
  - XV. Announcements
    - A. Next Meeting Date
    - B. Adjournment of Meeting



## RFP NO.: DPW24-RFP No.: 42400019

SUBMISSION DATE: January 16, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

### "Topographic and As-Built Survey of Natibu Recreational Sports Facilities, Precinct IV, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **December 15, 2023** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **January 04, 2024**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 11, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL  
Secretary, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.  
Acting Director, Division of  
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# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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**Mark Rabago** EDITOR  
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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

### EDITORIAL

## Social media news is about to get more dangerous

According to a recent report from The Washington Post, the Biden administration has stopped warning social media companies about possible foreign meddling on their platforms, which means the government is starting to treat those platforms like what they are: publishers. It's a logical move, but one that accelerates national security threats.

Foreign misinformation is a serious problem and a real threat to democracy. According to a 2018 bipartisan Senate report, Russia flooded every major social media platform with disinformation during the 2016 election season, and may have swayed the outcome. To state the obvious: American elections should be decided by informed American voters, not misinformed voters or Russian bots.

By stepping back from efforts to cooperate with these platforms, the government isn't saying the project isn't important, it's saying regulating speech is not its job. And, it must be acknowledged, it's responding to a crush of lawsuits by Republicans claiming government censorship of conservative views. That campaign has extended beyond the federal national security apparatus to public health agencies and even universities. Counterproductively, it has also encompassed government policies censoring some social media companies, showing that those efforts aren't really about free and open debate so much as they are about promoting one party's viewpoint.

Regardless of motive, the lawsuits have worked. This summer, a federal judge ruled the executive branch can't meet with tech platforms about removing falsehoods from their sites. That decision, now before the U.S. Supreme Court, included exemptions for national security threats, especially election interference. But now even that has apparently stopped.

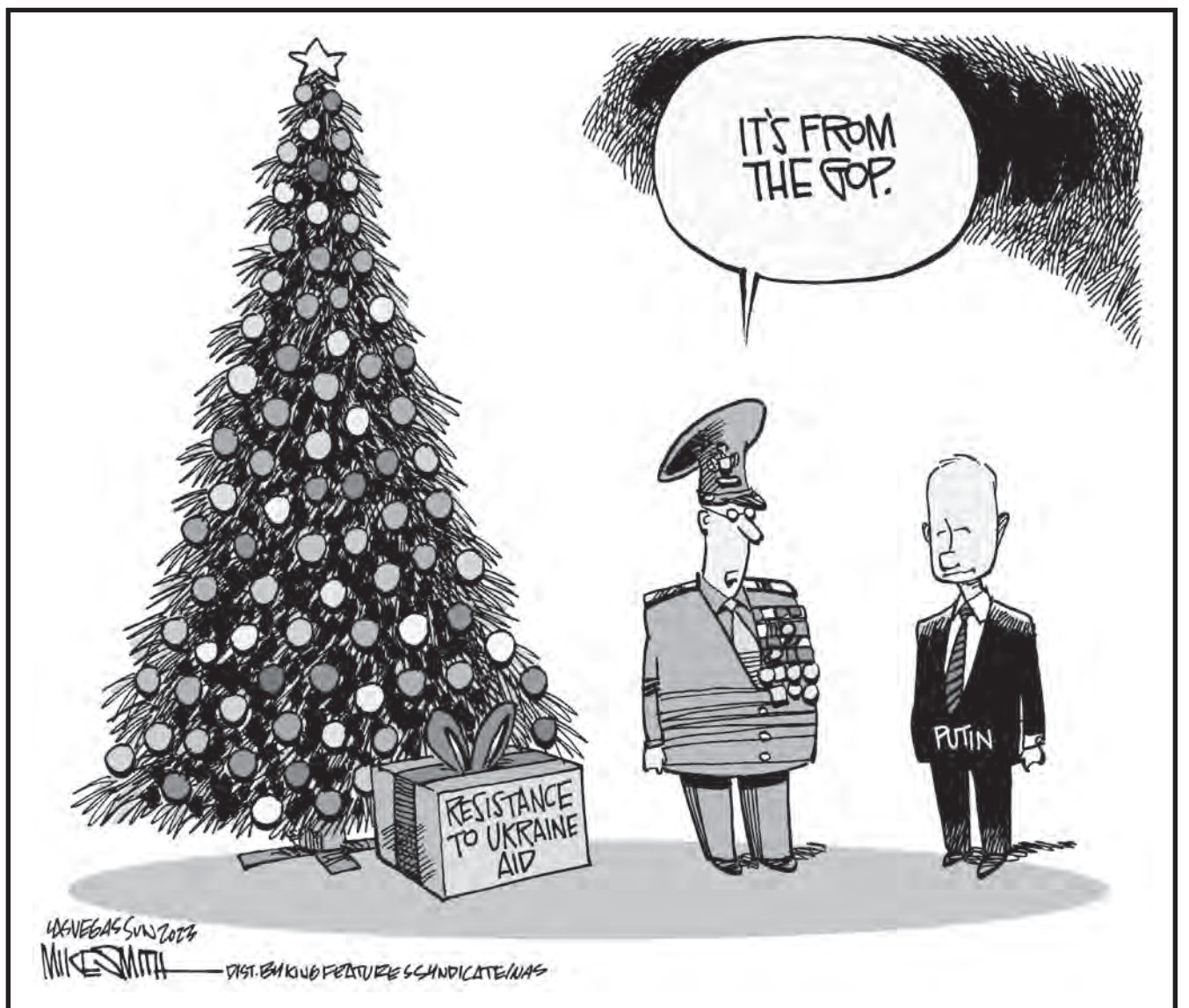
There are other concerns here, as well. The feds have long worked with social media companies to combat criminal activity, including child sexual abuse and terrorism. It's not clear whether the recent changes will affect those efforts.

The upshot of all this is easy to predict. The tasks of fact-checking and vetting the sources of information will fall to the platforms themselves, and we have little confidence they'll do it well. Content published on social media platforms is about to become even less trustworthy and more perilous than before.

The regulatory system for internet platforms, governed by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and popularly referred to as Section 230, has never been sustainable. It allows social media companies to operate without responsibility or accountability. But publishers must answer for what they publish, whether they do it with professional journalists or amateur influencers.

Social media news is about to get more dangerous. Hopefully, that's the first step toward it becoming more accountable.

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## Same hospital, same injury, same child, same day: Why did one ER visit cost thousands more?

The Kaiser Family Foundation recently reported that the annual cost of family health insurance jumped to nearly \$24,000 this year, the greatest increase in a decade. While insurance executives and employers may cite a plethora of reasons, one of the chief culprits is lack of oversight over the Wild West of health care prices.

My friend encountered a dramatic example of this last year after her 4-year-old daughter had the misfortune of suffering the same injury twice in the same day.

The girl's parents were getting her ready for school one morning when, as her hand was pulled through a shirt sleeve, she experienced severe pain. They took her to the children's emergency department down the road from their home in the Bay Area, where she was diagnosed with "nursemaid's elbow" or, more technically, a "radial head subluxation." Common in young children, whose ligaments are looser than adults', the partial dislocation is straightforward to diagnose and treat. A simple maneuver of the elbow put it back in place in seconds.

After coming home from school that afternoon, my friend's daughter was playing with her babysitter when her elbow got out of place again. They went back to the same emergency department and went through the same steps with another doctor.

My friend, who is fortunate enough to have good insurance and the means to pay her share, knew the bills wouldn't be cheap. What she wasn't expecting was such a stark illustration of the arbitrary nature of medical billing.

While the bill for the first visit was \$3,561, the second was \$6,056. Same child, same hospital, same insurance, same diagnosis, same procedure, same day—and yet the price was different by not just a few dollars or even a few hundred dollars, but nearly double.

How do we make sense of this? How can a patient be charged such wildly different prices for the same treatment on the same day?

Emergency room billing consists of hospital fees and professional services fees. The hospital fees include a "facility fee" that is part of every emergency room visit and coded at one of five

By RENEE Y. HSIA

Los Angeles Times

Renee Y. Hsia is a professor of emergency medicine and health policy at UC San Francisco as well as a Soros fellow and a Public Voices fellow at the OpEd Project.



levels. Level 1 is the simplest — someone needing a prescription, for example — while Level 5 is the most complicated, for problems such as heart attacks and strokes that require significant hospital resources. And of course there can be additional hospital fees for X-rays, medications and the like, which weren't necessary in the case of my friend's daughter.

The professional services fees are for the emergency physician and other providers such as radiologists. In this case, there were no fees for professionals other than the emergency room doctor.

But the itemized charges showed the two visits were billed completely differently. The first was charged a Level 1 facility fee and a Level 3 professional fee. And the bill tacked on additional fees, including hospital and professional charges for taking care of the patient's injured joint.

The second visit, meanwhile, was charged a Level 2 facility fee and a Level 4 professional fee, both higher than that morning. But in contrast to the earlier visit, no other charges appeared.

Why was the same injury coded as more complex and expensive to treat the second time than the first? Why did the coding and billing company decide to charge for additional services for the first visit but not the second?

I know both of the physicians who treated my daughter's friend; they work in the same group, use the same billing and coding company, and charge the same rates. So the different doctors don't explain the discrepancy. In my practice, even treating physicians have no access to information about how billing for our services is determined.

See SAME on Page 11



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## Will taking out Hamas leader Yehya Sinwar shorten the war?

Six days after 9/11, President George W. Bush gathered with his Cabinet for a meeting on how the United States planned to respond to the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history. The man at the top of Washington's target list was none other than al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden. "I want justice," Bush told the reporters assembled before the meeting began. "And there's an old poster out West ... I recall, that said, 'Wanted, Dead or Alive.'"

Twenty-two years and three months later, Israel is using similar language as it seeks to hunt down and kill Yehya Sinwar, the 61-year-old leader of Hamas in Gaza and an architect of the biggest attack on Israel since the state was founded in 1948. A spokesman for the Israeli military has called Sinwar "a dead man walking." Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has vowed that the entire Hamas leadership, Sinwar included, will be wiped out. "We will get to Yehya Sinwar and eliminate him," he said last month. "If the residents of Gaza get there ahead of us, that will shorten the war."

The Israel Defense Forces are well on their way. Israeli ground operations expanded to the south of Gaza weeks ago, an area of the enclave even more populated than Gaza City. The priority is Khan Younis, a city bursting at the seams with Palestinians who were displaced from the north and who are now being ordered to move yet again, this time toward the Gaza-Egypt border. As Israeli troops make their way through the city, Sinwar and the rest of Hamas' political and military hierarchy are trying to remain elusive. While the Israelis don't know Sinwar's exact location, they suspect that he's sitting somewhere in the terrorist group's underground tunnel system. And he's still giving orders; Sinwar signed off on the weeklong humanitarian truce with Israel in late November.

Israel believes that killing Sinwar will shorten the war and make its quest to destroy Hamas easier. A shorter war would obviously be in Israel's interest. The country is being excori-

ated at the United Nations for plunging Gaza into hell on earth and for killing far too many civilians in the course of its military operations. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was so concerned about Gaza's humanitarian situation that he invoked Article 99 of the U.N. Charter, which permits him to unilaterally elevate an issue to the Security Council's immediate attention. (This was the first time this specific article was used since 1971.)

More than 17,000 people have been killed in Gaza, according to Palestinian authorities. Not enough aid is getting into the enclave, and the aid that does get through isn't disbursed to where it needs to go. Even the United States, Israel's strongest backer, is increasingly concerned by the level of casualties, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

warning the Israelis to take much better care in their targeting. The longer the war drags on, the more heat Israel will receive.

Yet will neutralizing Sinwar lead to a shorter war, as Israeli officials claim?

It's tough not to sympathize with the prospect. Sinwar, after all, has been a key member of Hamas since its foundation in the late 1980s. Indeed, he's considered a co-founder of the organization. The man got his start as Hamas' internal enforcer, weeding out spies suspected of passing intelligence to Israel.

Sinwar's stature took off during his 22-year stint in an Israeli prison, where he emerged as Hamas' de facto leader inside the prison system and would be a central player in the 2011 deal that traded captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners held on various terrorism and criminal offenses (himself included). For Israel, Sinwar's role as the man ultimately responsible for the Oct. 7 attack is icing on the cake.

Nobody is disputing that targeting Sinwar is legally or morally justified. Killing him would be a justifiable act of self-defense and a sign that if Hamas or any other terrorist organization dares to strike Israel, the bill will eventually be paid in full.

Even so, it would be premature for Israel to conclude that

Will neutralizing Sinwar lead to a shorter war, as Israeli officials claim? It's tough not to sympathize with the prospect. Sinwar, after all, has been a key member of Hamas since its foundation in the late 1980s.

By **DANIEL DEPETRIS**

Chicago Tribune

*Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.*



Sinwar's death will, over time, result in Hamas' total and complete annihilation.

Terrorism scholars are divided on the question of whether killing the top echelon of a terrorist group is a net positive for those doing the targeting. Georgetown University professor Daniel Byman's scholarship suggests that taking out a terrorist group's leadership is an efficient way to weaken the entire group overall. When skilled bomb-makers, leaders, financiers and commanders are taken off the battlefield, the group is forced to promote less skilled people as replacements, leading to attacks that are less impactful and recruitment efforts that are less effective. As with any organization, removing talent is a surefire way of degrading its work.

Others, however, conclude that leadership targeting isn't all Champagne and roses. Professor Jenna Jordan of the Georgia Institute of Technology argues that terrorist groups tend to adapt to leadership decapitation and, if able to draw on some social support, can survive and thrive well into the future. Terrorist groups will respond to the death of a leader or commander with retaliatory attacks or incite their followers in the West to conduct an act of revenge. And if the terrorist group being targeted is known to have a bureaucratic structure, as Hamas most certainly does, then replacements will be found and roles quickly filled. It's not like Israel hasn't gone after the top dogs of Hamas before.

The debate about how best to counter terrorism will persist as long as terrorism remains a problem. But in Israel, there is no debate: Sinwar needs to go.

### **SAME**

From page 10

My friend and I contacted the hospital's billing department repeatedly, but they proved unable to provide any rational explanation.

Unfortunately, this isn't new. About a decade ago, I published a series of studies showing how arbitrary medical billing can be. Hospitals charged fees ranging from \$10 to \$10,169 for a cholesterol test; \$1,529 to \$182,995 for an appendicitis hospitalization without complications; and \$3,296 to \$37,227 for a normal vaginal birth.

Only uninsured patients are asked to pay these sticker prices. But despite the "discounts" granted to insured patients through their insurance companies, these charges end up sneaking into higher premiums and other costs. Medical bills are responsible for about 59% of U.S. bankruptcies.

There are few certainties in life, but one of them is that we will all need health care at some point. And another, at least for those of us living in America, is that we have no idea what it will cost or why. This would never be tolerated in any other industry.

What can we do about it? Here's where we could benefit from a government agency like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which helps regulate banks and other financial entities that perpetrate what have been called "injustices against everyday Americans." We need someone to regulate the injustices inflicted on Americans every day at the hands of the health care system too. Recent efforts by the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice to police health care mergers and address other anticompetitive behavior in the industry could also help.

More government regulation and oversight won't address the more fundamental problem that we keep trying to treat health care as a market good, which it clearly isn't. But it could help ensure that treating a minor injury one afternoon doesn't cost twice as much as it did that morning.

### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

## Our vocal and silent politicians

Our leaders are not as unified as they need to be if the CNMI is to gain any real footing and synergy in addressing our economy. We are witnessing the same old "one-man show" to a large degree when it comes to representing the people of the CNMI. Too often I fail to see a real united effort to accomplish goals other than for the GOP's gambling issues and passage of legislation, which is not enough. They are still talking about e-gaming—a four- or five-year-old matter.

Voting "yes" or "no" does not fully represent the people's desires on all the issues facing the CNMI. There should have been a slew of our leaders supporting Rep. Flores complaining about the Casino Commission, especially when there is over \$141 million at stake

when we are counting pennies. Rep. Flores is doing the work for the people by speaking out and protesting but from where I sit with the rest of us regular folks, she is not getting any real help from her counterparts in the Legislature. All it takes for malfeasant behavior to exist in the CNMI is for the good leaders and people to do and say nothing, which is what is happening with the Casino Commission and our money that is going unchecked with no accountability.

Rep. Flores' attempt to get the Casino Commission to resign is proving to be a one-person show, as it seems the rest of our legislators are either playing ignorant or playing safe politics by doing and saying nothing. The CNMI needs real synergy more than anything when it comes to finding new rev-

enue sources but it's only one-at-a-time efforts that the people are seeing.

Rep. Flores is just the most recent leader who is trying to fix a problem that has catastrophic or prosperous implications for our Commonwealth and we need to be focusing on achieving the latter of the two potential outcomes. Only silent politicians have to worry about being re-elected, not the outspoken!

I can only think of three leaders like Rep. Ed Propst, Sen. Edith De Leon Guerrero, and Sen. Babauta who really speak-out on issues and are truly fighting in the public for the people, and not just on the Legislature floor. As for the rest of our leaders, they have remained pretty much in the background when it comes to speaking out publicly to support or protest on issues—no

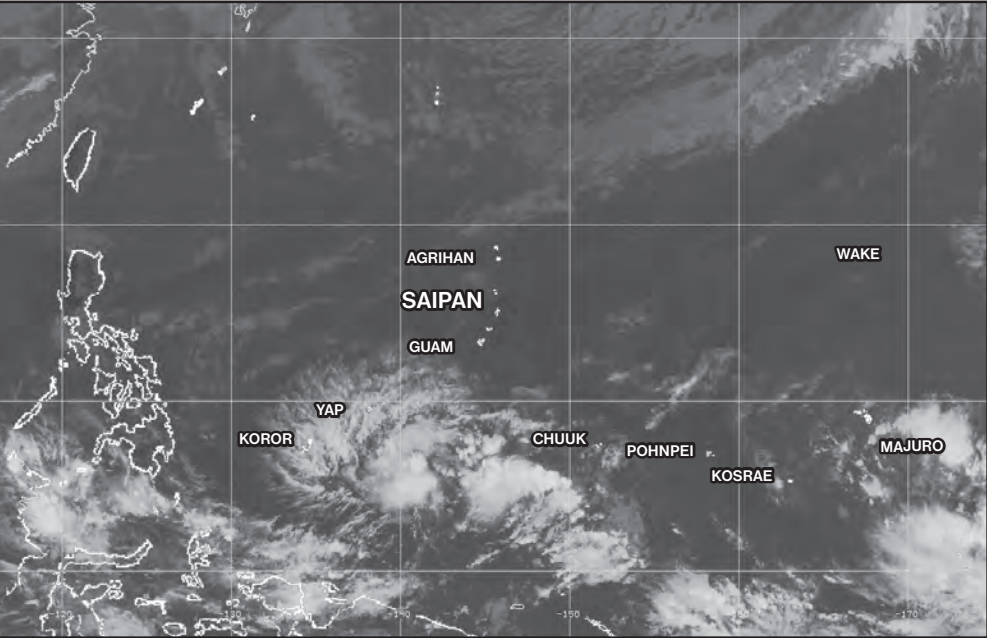
solidarity nor synergy. We don't know what they think about these issues when they are supposed to be keeping their constituents informed! Heck, Rep. Propst's work for the people is so well known and appreciated that he didn't even have to campaign for his seat, as the former vocal Rep. Stanley Torres is the only other person to get elected without campaigning, which should tell the other people in the Legislature that if you really do your job for the people you don't have to worry about getting re-elected. Kudos to Rep. Flores, Rep. Propst and Sen. Edith and Sen. Babauta as I can tell from Kagman that too many of our leaders on the Hill have been playing it safe by being quiet and it needs to stop if the CNMI is to have solidarity and forward in turning around our economy.

**Ambrose M. Bennett**  
Kagman III, Saipan



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.		Breezy. Mostly sunny with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.	
86	77°	86	77°	86	77°	86	77°	86	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 8:20 AM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly cloudy skies and isolated showers within and east of the Marianas Waters. The buoys reveal combined seas of 6 to 8 feet, composed of a large northeast swell and smaller east-southeast wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Showers	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Showers	86° / 79°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Saturday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Sunday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Monday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Tuesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:39 AM	8:03 PM	-
Saturday	9:36 AM	9:08 PM	-
Sunday	10:27 AM	10:10 PM	-
Monday	11:13 AM	11:08 PM	-
Tuesday	11:55 AM	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 61°	
Beijing	Sunny	39° / 19°	
Hong Kong	Sunny	68° / 54°	
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	79° / 69°	
London	Partly Cloudy	43° / 39°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	68° / 49°	
Manila	Showers	86° / 75°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	86° / 63°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	79° / 72°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	53° / 39°	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	48° / 34°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 37°	
Busan	Sunny	43° / 28°	
Rome	Sunny	50° / 30°	
Salem	Showers	63° / 52°	
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 47°	
Seoul	Mixed	34° / 19°	
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	46° / 37°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	60° / 43°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
3:00 AM	Low Tide	-0.79	
10:25 AM	High Tide	1.78	
3:36 PM	Low Tide	1.24	
8:06 PM	High Tide	1.77	

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Bank of Guam welcomed and thanked numerous non-profit organizations for their invaluable work in our community during a Special Giving Tuesday Celebration at Capitol Kitchen on Dec. 5, 2023.

## BOG

From page 9

with our year-round campaign to 'Be Kind' and 'FindKind,' it brings us joy to recognize, support, and Give A Little Love to Bake Their Day, Chuuk Women's Council, Guam Animals In Need, and Harvest House for their unwavering commitment to our island communities and those most in need. There are so many worthy organizations, and we're beyond proud of our employees for selecting organizations whose mission resonates so deeply with many of them. We continue to encourage and remind everyone to Give A Little Love

and Spread Kindness all year long," said Bank of Guam president and chief executive officer Joaquin P. L.G. Cook.

The Holiday Give was unveiled at Bank of Guam's Special Giving Tuesday Celebration on Dec. 5 at Capitol Kitchen. The event served as a "Reverse-Give" and celebration, thanking some of the island's community partners for their contributions and the meaningful impact they make in our island communities throughout the year.

At the event, the inaugural Open Heart Award by Bank of Guam was given to Habibi's Catering now Habibi's Mediterranean Delicacies, led by founder and chef Nedal Ouwer and general manager

Leilani Castro. This award honors one community partner or business that embody kindness, compassion and generosity.

"It's been heartwarming to witness Habibi's journey both as a business and as a contributing member to our island community. We were deeply connected most by Habibi's purpose and pledge 'to help whoever you can, wherever you can, and whenever you can.' They've filled so many bellies and so many hearts with their generous spirit, uplifting and inspiring so many in our community along the way. On Giving Tuesday, and all year long, we thank Habibi's and all our community partners for everything you do," said Bank

of Guam senior vice president and chief experience officer Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero.

Habibi's has been a beacon of generosity, providing meals before and after Typhoon Mawar—preparing over 30,000 meals across the island to families in need and living in the shelters, first responders, and emergency workers—all while overcoming limited resources and personal challenges. Their story and mission connected with so many in the community, resulting in numerous donations of supplies, food, and volunteers.

Bank of Guam sends their thanks and appreciation to all the non-profits and organizations in attendance including American Cancer Society, Autism Community Together, Bake Their Day, Dededo Mayor's Office, GTA, Guam Animals In Need, Guam Cancer Care, Guam Girl Scouts,



BOG

As an extension of Giving Tuesday, the inaugural Open Heart Award by Bank of Guam was given to Habibi's Catering now Habibi's Mediterranean Delicacies. The award honors one community partner or business that embody kindness, compassion and generosity. Pictured (from left) Jose Castro, restaurant supervisor, Habibi's; Joaquin P. L.G. Cook, president and chief executive officer, Bank of Guam; Leilani Castro, general manager, Habibi's; and Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, senior vice president and chief experience officer, Bank of Guam.

Guam Memorial Hospital Volunteers Association, Harvest House, Recycle, KUAM Careforce, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Todu Guam Foundation, and Victims Advocate Reaching Out.

Bank of Guam remains committed to supporting and recognizing those who make a positive impact in our community, embodying the true spirit of the holiday season. (BOG)



## COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-24-003

#### Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of a waterline main, service laterals, connection to the existing waterline main, and the installation of fire hydrants.

*The project is funded by a grant from the US Department of Interior/Office of Insular Affairs (US DOI/OIA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from US DOI/OIA.*

CUC requires the project to be completed in **210 calendar days** from the date of award of the contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **December 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST** be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-24-003, Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 27, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of **fifteen percent (15%)** of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A **Payment Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent and a **Performance Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 14, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Procurement & Supply Purchasing Administrator, via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org), with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer via email at [larry.manacop@cucgov.org](mailto:larry.manacop@cucgov.org), Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at [joel.puyat@cucgov.org](mailto:joel.puyat@cucgov.org) and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE  
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator

## MOBILE CLINIC SCHEDULE for December 2023

### Adult Health Check

**Dec 1st & 16th**

- Dec. 1 at Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe from 8:00AM - 11:30AM**
- Dec. 16 at Lucky De Market, Dan Dan from 8:00AM - 11:30AM**

Clinical check with provider includes routine wellness exam, physical screening for height and weight, and/or consultation for other concerns. Other community health services: blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals.

### Child Health Check

**Dec 6th & 20th**

- Dec. 6 at Angel Market, Kagman from 1:00PM - 4:30PM**
- Dec. 20 at Tanapag Youth Center from 1:00PM - 4:30PM**

For children 0-17 years old. Clinical check with provider includes developmental behavioral assessment, measurement and growth, other health screening, and/or consultation for other concerns.

### Women Health Check

**Dec 27th**

- Dec. 27 at Santa Remedios Church, Tanapag from 8:00AM-11:30AM**

Recommended for women who haven't seen a provider in over a year for clinical services: Pap Smears, breast exams, prenatal care, postpartum care, and/or contraceptive counseling and methods.


## DECEMBER IS HIV/AIDS AWARENESS MONTH

(670) 287-9926/9927/9929 [www.chcc.health](http://www.chcc.health) @cnmichcc

#### WHAT TO BRING:

- INSURANCE CARD** (Medicaid and most private insurances accepted)
- VALID PHOTO ID** (Driver's license, Passport, Mayor's ID, etc.)





# NMPASI

NORTHERN MARIANAS PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEMS, INC.


PO Box 503529, Saipan, MP 96950 Tel. Nos.: (670) 235-7273/4 - Fax: (670) 235-7275

## Request for Proposal

The Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) is soliciting proposals for Audit of financial and compliance audit for fiscal year ending **September 30, 2023**. NMPASI is designated, federally funded protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities in the CNMI. NMPASI uses a variety of individual and systems advocacy approaches to protect people's rights, including legal and administrative remedies, legislative, policy change and trainings. Proposals for the financial and compliance audit shall be submitted to NMPASI, P.O. Box 503529, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than January 19, 2024. The audit shall be performed in compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards;
2. OMB Circular A-133; and
3. Compliance with the general Requirements Applicable to Federal Financial Assistance Program.

Award will be based on specific factor such as prior experience, technical competence, ability to meet the deadline and price in this order. The contract for this audit will be awarded no later than **December 30, 2023**, and a final audit report shall be completed by **March 15, 2024**. A list of specific audit requirements and Agency's profile are available at NMPASI office, Marianas Business Plaza, 5th floor Room 505. Any questions regarding this matter can be addressed to Mr. Gregory Borja, Executive Director at (670) 235-7273/4 (voice) or email at gborja@nmpasi.org.



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

## NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.net

### PUBLIC NOTICE

11.16.2023

#### Notice for Public Comment

Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-COVID Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.	Program:	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming Amount	Proposed Revised Project Budget	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 720	CDBG-CV	Acquisition of a Mobile Clinic for Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation	Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation	\$521,806.50	(\$69,719.52)	\$452,086.98	\$521,806.50
IDIS# 727	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV Food Pantry Program (Karidat Social Services)	Karidat Social Services, Saipan	\$391,292.05	(\$60.71)	\$391,231.34	\$391,292.05
IDIS# 718	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV 19 Planning and Administrative (Purchase of Mobile Clinic for CHCC)		\$27,463.50	(\$6,695.60)	\$20,767.90	\$27,463.50
IDIS# 724	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV Emergency Housing Assistance (Mortgage Assistance)		\$150,903.25	(\$75,996.69)	\$74,906.56	\$150,903.25
IDIS# 742	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV Emergency Rental Payment Assistance		\$110,000.00	(\$6,001.81)	\$103,998.19	\$110,000.00
		<b>Total Reprogrammed from Activities:</b>			<b>(\$158,474.33)</b>		
IDIS# 727	CDBG-CV	CDBG CV Food Pantry Program	Center for Living Independently in the CNMI	\$126,465.50	\$130,474.33	\$256,939.83	\$126,465.50
IDIS# 729	CDBG-CV	CDBG CV Food Pantry Program Planning and Administrative costs		\$28,100.45	\$28,000.00	\$56,100.45	\$28,100.45
		<b>Total Reprogrammed to Activities:</b>			<b>\$158,474.33</b>		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds over \$100,001.00/Planning and Administrative Cost to a project activity, which constitutes as a substantial amendment. Therefore, any comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before December 19, 2023 no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447.

**"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"**

## Dutch court orders Greenpeace activists to leave deep-sea mining ship in South Pacific

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)**—A Dutch court ruled Thursday that Greenpeace protesters staging a sit-in must leave a deep-sea mining exploration ship in the Pacific Ocean between Mexico and Hawaii but that they can continue to demonstrate around the vessel.

Canada-based The Metals Company, whose subsidiary Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. runs the ship, Coco, accused the protesters of endangering the crew and breaking international law.

The case was heard in Amsterdam, where the Greenpeace protest ship Arctic Sunrise, which is involved in the protest, is registered.

Greenpeace began the protest a week ago by paddling kayaks beneath the Coco for up to 10 hours at a time to prevent it deploying equipment in the water. Two activists also boarded the ship and pledged to stay camped on the main crane used to deploy and retrieve equipment from the water until The Metals Company agrees to leave.

The protest comes as international demand for critical minerals found on the seafloor grows, but an increasing number of countries say more research is needed into the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining.

A subsidiary of The Metals Company has been conducting exploratory research in the Clarion Clipperton Zone of the Pacific since 2011. They say data from their latest expedition, researching how the seabed recovered from exploration last year, will be used in an application to begin mining in 2025.

In a summary ruling, Amsterdam District Court said that Greenpeace can "continue its actions around a ship in the South Pacific, but must instruct its activists to immediately leave" the vessel.

The court said that while Greenpeace has a profound interest in protesting against the research "its interest in doing so on the ship itself weighs less heavily than the interest of the owner of the ship, who is responsible for the safety of those on board."

The court said Greenpeace would have to pay 50,000 euros (\$54,560) per day up to a maximum of 500,000 euros if the activists remain on the ship.

A Greenpeace statement called the ruling "a massive setback for the deep-sea mining industry." It also lashed out at The Metals Company, claiming it "has never been interested in scrutiny and they can't stand that Greenpeace is watching and opposing them at every turn."

"We are determined to keep bringing this dangerous industry to public attention and will continue to disrupt this dangerous industry", said Mads Christensen, head of Greenpeace International.


The Metals Company CEO & Chairman Gerard Barron welcomed the ruling.

"We respect Greenpeace's right to peaceful protest and expression of opinions," Barron said. "However, our foremost responsibility is to ensure the safe continuance of our legally-mandated operations, and the safety of all those involved."

He said the company would "continue to gather the important scientific data" for members of the International Seabed Authority.


Environmental groups reject deep-sea mining and fear the international authority will soon authorize the world's first license to harvest minerals from the ocean floor.

Mining companies say that harvesting minerals from the deep sea instead of land is cheaper and has less of an environmental impact. But scientists and environmental groups argue that less than 1% of the world's deep seas have been explored, and they warn that deep-sea mining could unleash noise, light and suffocating dust storms.



**COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY**

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.  
PO BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950  
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962  
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM • WEBSITE: HTTPS://WWW.CNMIPTS.COM



**Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport**  
**"Car Rental Concession"**

### Request for Proposals

**for: CPA-RFP-001-24**  
**CPA Concession No. CRS-2023-01**


The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of two years with an option upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-Concession No. CRS-2023-01 is **December 6, 2023**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on January 9, 2024**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of \$100.00. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, or cashier's check payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.


The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

/s/  
LEO B. TUDELA  
Executive Director



**COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY**

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055  
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962  
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com



### JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02-2024

**Opening date: November 24, 2023      Closing date: December 22, 2023**

**Location: SAIPAN**  
Position(s): (1) Saipan Airport Manager  
(1) Comptroller

**SALARY**  
\$70,000 (UNGRADED)  
\$80,000 (UNGRADED)

**Location: ROTA**  
Position(s): (1) Rota Ports Manager

**SALARY**  
\$55,000 (UNGRADED)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00P.M. on Friday, December 22, 2023**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at loma.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA  
Executive Director



# Operation Christmas Drop 2023



US AIR FORCE

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Justin Magno and Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Cruz, 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron loadmasters, watch as bundles of humanitarian aid drop to the island of Eauripik, Federated States of Micronesia, Dec. 6, 2023, during Operation Christmas Drop 2023 (OCD 23).



U.S. AIR FORCE/SENIOR AIRMAN AKEEM K. CAMPBELL

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Justin Magno and Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Cruz, 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron loadmasters, push off pallets of humanitarian aid on Dec. 6, 2023, during Operation Christmas Drop 2023.



US AIR FORCE

From left, U.S. Air Force Capt. Matthew Hopkins, 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron scheduling officer, USAF Maj. Derek Andeweg, 374th Operations Group standards and evaluation chief, and Royal Malaysian Air Force Maj. Mohamed Zulhilmy Bin Mohamed Zulkifly, air dispatcher, look at the Federated States of Micronesia from the cockpit of a USAF C-130J Super Hercules during Operation Christmas Drop 2023 (OCD 23), Dec. 6, 2023.



US AIR FORCE

U.S. Air Force aerial porters from the 81st Aerial Port Squadron (APS), Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, and the 44th APS from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, work alongside 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron loadmasters to load a U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules with bundles of humanitarian aid during Operation Christmas Drop 2023 (OCD 23) at Andersen AFB, Guam, Dec. 6, 2023.



US AIR FORCE

Airmen from the U.S. Air Force, Indonesian Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force, Royal Netherlands Air Force, and Royal Malaysian Air Force pose for a group photo at Andersen Air Force Base, Dec. 6, 2023, during Operation Christmas Drop 2023 (OCD 23). OCD is the Department of Defense's longest-running humanitarian airlift operation which consists of packaging and delivering donated supplies such as food, fishing equipment, schoolbooks and clothing to more than 20,000 islanders across 58 remote islands throughout the Pacific.

**EFG PACIFIC HOLDINGS, LLC dba. ISLAND BEST CHOICE** is a manpower agency in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. EFG PACIFIC HOLDINGS, LLC is currently seeking 2 Accountants to join our office located at Room 104, Marianas Business Plaza, Nauru Loop, Susupe, Saipan, MP, 96950.

## ACCOUNTANT

**Responsibilities:**  
Provide accounting services to clients from various industries. Prepare, analyze, and verify financial statements and other records for clients using US GAAP. Evaluate client finances to determine tax liability, prepare tax returns and provide tax advice to clients. Report to management about asset utilization and audit results, and recommend changes in operations and financial activities. Direct activities of personnel engaged in filing, recording, compiling, and transmitting financial records.

- Qualifications:**
- US Bachelor's Degree or its foreign equivalent degree in Accountancy.
  - 60 months experience as Accountant.

Candidates who fulfill the aforementioned requirements are invited to submit their resume to Eden Guillo: [efg.pacific.holdings@gmail.com](mailto:efg.pacific.holdings@gmail.com).

## JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

**NAME OF EMPLOYER:** AFH, Inc. dba Natural Nail Spa

**THE POSITION:** Beautician

**NUMBER OF VACANCIES:** 1

**JOB DESCRIPTION:** Provide beauty services such as: Shampooing, cutting, coloring, and styling hair, massaging, and treating scalp; Apply makeup, dress wigs; Perform hair removal; and Provide nail and skin care services.


**MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

**EDUCATION:** Must be at least a High School graduate.  
**EXPERIENCE:** Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as a Beautician.  
**OTHER SPECIAL SKILLS OR REQUIREMENTS** Must know details of hair care and treatment, make-up, nail and skin care services, and other aspects of beauty enhancement.

**JOB SITE:** Chalan Pale Arnold Road (Middle Road), Gualo Rai, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

**HOW TO APPLY:** If interested, please submit or mail application and comprehensive resume, with supporting credentials to:


**EDEN G. ORDAS**  
General Manager  
**AFH, INC. DBA NATURAL NAIL SPA**  
**Office Address:** : Chalan Pale Arnold Road (Middle Road), Gualo Rai Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
**Mailing Address:** PMB 955, P.O. Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950  
**Email Address:** [edenfguillo@yahoo.com](mailto:edenfguillo@yahoo.com)  
**Telephone Number:** Tel. (670) 234-6245



**DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 • Gualo Rai Center, Saipan

TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315 • [www.dcrm.gov.mp](http://www.dcrm.gov.mp)



**NOTICE OF APPLICATION**

As of December 15, 2023

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

NO.	APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1.	Office of the Mayor of Rota	11/27/2023 RLRm-2023-010	East Harbor Marina Boat Ramp Repair	East Harbor, Rota	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 12/04/2023
2.	Mariana Global, Inc.	12/04/2023 SLR-2024-009	Commercial Snorkeling, Kayaking, Stand Up Paddle Boarding and Surfboarding Activities	Managaha Island	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 12/05/2023

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (\*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.



# Business

## Hyatt extends local rate promo



HYATT

It is the season to be with your loved ones with a unique stay-cation promotion at Hyatt Regency Saipan. For a low as \$140, residents can enjoy a night in an Ocean View Room with complimentary breakfast buffet at Kili Café & Terrace.

Last month, Hyatt Regency Saipan created a limited time offer to all CNMI and Guam residents with a one-night stay with breakfast for two for only \$140. Due to popular demand, the offer has been extended until Jan. 2, 2024. It is a perfect gift ideas and Hyatt hopes that this promo will help families enjoy the holidays.

It is the season to be with your loved ones with a unique stay-cation promotion at Hyatt Regency Saipan. For a low as \$140, residents can enjoy a

night in an Ocean View Room with complimentary breakfast buffet at Kili Café & Terrace.

While in residence, you may enjoy hotel services such as the fitness center, outdoor swimming pool, tennis and pickle ball courts, beach loungers as well as complimentary Wi-Fi connections, parking, and many more. Find yourself frolicking on Micro Beach or try some of the open water activities available at Seawind Saipan. Alternatively, enjoy some health and fitness activities such as pool

side Zumba and pickle ball games taking place regularly on the hotel resort.

For room reservations, go directly to [saipan.regency@hyatt.com](mailto:saipan.regency@hyatt.com) and book under the offer code LOCAL and present an identification card upon check-in. Room rate is subject to fees and taxes.

You can also call (670) 234-1234 or visit our Instagram and Facebook pages @hyattregencysaipan for up-to-date promos and fun activities at the hotel. (Hyatt)

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### Apple now requires court orders in US to access push notification data

WASHINGTON (AP)—Apple is now requiring that U.S. law enforcement agencies obtain a court order for information on its customers' push notifications, the alerts that iPhone apps send users that can reveal a lot about their online activity. Push notifications alert smartphone users to breaking news alerts, incoming messages, weather bulletins and other content. The policy shift was not formally announced but rather appeared in an updated version of Apple's law enforcement guidelines posted online. Apple's main competitor in mobile operating systems, Google, already had such a policy in place for its Android system.

The Cupertino, California, company did not immediately respond to questions about it. The privacy-enhancing policy was added following last week's disclosure by Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden

that his office had received a tip last year that government agencies in foreign countries were demanding smartphone push notification data from both Google and Apple. "Apple and Google are in a unique position to facilitate government surveillance of how users are using particular apps," Wyden wrote Attorney General Merrick Garland on Dec. 6.

#### Tesla recalls nearly all vehicles sold in US to fix system that monitors drivers using Autopilot

DETROIT (AP)—Tesla is recalling nearly all vehicles sold in the U.S., more than 2 million, to update software and fix a defective system that's supposed to ensure drivers are paying attention when using Autopilot. Documents posted Wednesday by U.S. safety regulators say the update will increase warnings and alerts to drivers and even limit the areas where basic versions of Autopilot can operate. The recall comes after

a two-year investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration into a series of crashes that happened while the Autopilot partially automated driving system was in use. Some were deadly. The agency says its investigation found Autopilot's method of making sure that drivers are paying attention can be inadequate and can lead to "foreseeable misuse of the system."

The added controls and alerts will "further encourage the driver to adhere to their continuous driving responsibility," the documents said. But safety experts said that, while the recall is a good step, it still makes the driver responsible and doesn't fix the underlying problem that Tesla's automated systems have with spotting and stopping for obstacles in their path. The recall covers models Y, S, 3 and X produced between Oct. 5, 2012, and Dec. 7 of this year. The update was to be sent to certain affected vehicles on Tuesday, with the rest getting it later.

# Nation

## Biden will consider new border, asylum controls

WASHINGTON (AP)—Top Biden administration officials labored Wednesday to try to reach a last-minute deal for wartime aid for Ukraine by agreeing to Senate Republican demands to bolster U.S.-Mexico border policies, with urgency setting in as Congress prepared to depart Washington with the impasse unresolved.

The White House was racing to lock in a deal in principle with key Senate negotiators, according to two people familiar with the plans who demanded anonymity to discuss them. A core negotiating group, which has included Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, departed the Capitol Wednesday evening after making progress but without the principles of a deal finalized.

As details of the plan emerged, advocates for immigrants and members of President Joe Biden's own Democratic Party fretted about the policies under discussion. Some demonstrated at the Capitol, warning of a return to the hardline border and immigration policies of the Trump era.

Congress has little time to reach an agreement on Biden's \$110 billion request for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs that Republicans are holding up to demand changes to border policy. While White House officials and key Sen-

ate negotiators appeared to be narrowing in on a list of priorities to tighten the U.S.-Mexico border and remove some recent migrant arrivals already in the U.S., Senate Republicans earlier Wednesday said not enough progress had been made to justify staying in Washington beyond Thursday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Washington this week to implore lawmakers for support, but lawmakers were still ready to leave for weeks with one of the U.S.'s key international commitments—helping halt Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion into Ukraine—seriously in doubt. Also left hanging would be a deal on one of the most unwieldy issues in American politics: immigration and border security.

"The talks are continuing," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer as he closed the Senate Wednesday night.

Among the proposals being seriously discussed, according to several people familiar with the private talks, are plans to allow Homeland Security officials to stop migrants from applying for asylum at the U.S. southern border if the number of total crossings exceeds daily capacity of roughly 5,000. Some one-day totals this year have exceeded 10,000.

Also under discussion are proposals to detain people claiming asylum at the border,

including families with children, potentially with electronic monitoring systems.

Negotiators are also eyeing ways to allow authorities to quickly remove migrants who have been in the United States for less than two years, even if they are far from the border. But those removals would only extend to people who either have not claimed asylum or were not approved to enter the asylum system, according to one of the people briefed on the negotiations.

The policies resemble ones that President Donald Trump's Republican administration tried to implement to cut border crossings, but many of them were successfully challenged in court. If Congress were to make them law, it would give immigration advocates very little legal ground to challenge the restrictions for those seeking asylum.

Advocates for immigrant warned of a return to anti-immigrant policies and questioned whether they would even address problems at the border.

"I never would have imagined that in a moment where we have a Democratic Senate and a Democratic White House we are coming to the table and proposing some of the most draconian immigration policies that there have ever been," said Maribel Hernández Rivera, American Civil Liberties Union director of policy and government affairs.

### AP-NORC POLL SHOWS

## Few US adults would be satisfied with possible Biden-Trump rematch in 2024

WASHINGTON (AP)—It's the presidential election no one is really jazzed about.

Relatively few Americans are excited about a potential rematch of the 2020 election between President Joe Biden and Donald Trump, although more Republicans would be satisfied to have Trump as their nominee than Democrats would be with Biden as their standard-bearer, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

That palpable apathy from voters comes even as both Biden and Trump are facing relatively few obstacles in their paths to lock down their respective parties' nominations

next year. Biden has amassed broad support from Democratic officials as a handful of mostly token primary challengers have struggled to spark momentum. And despite 91 indictments across four criminal cases — including some centered on his attempts to overturn his electoral loss to Biden in 2020—Trump's grip on GOP primary voters shows no signs of loosening a month before the first nominating contest in Iowa.

"Probably the best way to put it is, I find it sad for our country that that's our best choices," said Randy Johnson, 64, from Monett, Missouri. Johnson, who is a Republican, said he wishes there were

a third legitimate option for president but that the political system does not make that viable and added: "We're down to the lesser of two evils."

Andrew Collins, 35, an independent from Windham, Maine, said: "This is probably the most uniquely horrible choice I've had in my life."

About half of Democrats say they would be very or somewhat satisfied if Biden becomes the party's 2024 nominee. About one-third of Democrats would be dissatisfied, and about 1 in 5 would be "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied." When it comes to the Republican Party nomination, enthusiasm is higher for GOP front-runner Donald Trump.



# Off the Wall

## Thousands descend on NYC for Santa-themed bar crawl



Revelers take part in the annual SantaCon charity pub crawl on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023 in New York.

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Here come Santa Clauses. Again.

Throng of people dressed as jolly Old St. Nick descended on New York City for the annual SantaCon charity pub crawl on Saturday.

The booze-fueled stroll, which included no shortage of Grinches, elves and other Christmas-themed costumes, kicked off at 10 a.m. in bars and clubs in midtown Manhattan. Revelers were expected to make their way downtown where the festivities end at 8 p.m. in local watering holes in the East Village.

The organizers encouraged

participants to donate \$15 to enter participating venues, which they have said will go to charitable causes.

Similar Christmas-themed bacchanals were slated in cities across the U.S. and Europe, from San Francisco and Cincinnati to London and Berlin, on Saturday.

As in years past, transit agencies hoped to keep the revelry from causing too much chaos in the nation's busiest train system.

Commuter rail lines from New Jersey and the New York suburbs banned passengers from drinking on trains headed into Manhattan

starting from 4 a.m. Saturday through noon Sunday.

The New York Police Department also reminded revelers that the city's open container laws prohibit consuming alcohol in the street still applies.

"Ensuring everyone has access to safe and orderly travel is a top priority," Metropolitan Transit Authority Police Chief John Mueller said in a statement this week announcing the restrictions. "The holiday season is a wonderful time of year, and we want everyone to get to their destination smoothly and on time while enjoying the festivities."

## Russian man who flew on LA flight without passport, ticket is charged

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—A Russian man who flew on a plane from Denmark to Los Angeles in November without a passport or ticket told U.S. authorities he did not remember how he got through security in Europe, according to a federal complaint filed by the FBI.

Sergey Vladimirovich Ochigava arrived at Los Angeles International Airport on Nov. 4 via Scandinavian Airlines flight 931 from Copenhagen. A U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer could not find Ochigava on the flight manifest or any other incoming international flights, according to the complaint filed Nov. 6 in Los Angeles federal court.

He was charged with being a stowaway on an aircraft and pleaded not guilty in a Dec.

5 arraignment. A trial was scheduled for Dec. 26. A federal public defender representing Ochigava, who remained in custody Tuesday, did not immediately return a phone message from The Associated Press seeking comment.

The flight crew told investigators that during the flight's departure, Ochigava was in a seat that was supposed to be unoccupied. After departure, he kept wandering around the plane, switching seats and trying to talk to other passengers, who ignored him, according to the complaint.

## Californian passes state bar exam at age 17 and is sworn in as an attorney

**VISALIA, Calif.** (AP)—A county prosecutor's office says one of its law clerks passed the State Bar of California exam at age 17.

The Tulare County District Attorney's Office said this week that, according to research, Peter Park is the youngest person to pass the exam.

The State Bar said Friday in an email to The Associated Press that it could not confirm that Park is the youngest, but it hailed his achievement.

"Passing the California Bar exam is a major accomplishment at any age, and for someone as young as Mr. Park, it is quite an extraordinary feat and one worth celebrating," Executive Director Leah Wilson said.

Park took the exam in July and received the test results on Nov. 9, according to a news release issued by the District Attorney's office this week.

"It was not easy, but it was worth it," Park said in a statement.

Park began high school at Oxford Academy in Cypress, California, in 2019 at age 13 and simultaneously began a four-year juris doctor program at the Northwestern California University School of Law after completing college-level proficiency exams, the office said.

Park graduated high school in 2021 by taking the state's high school proficiency exam and focused on law school, graduating this year. He became a law clerk for the District Attorney's office in August, turned 18 in late November and was sworn in as an attorney on Tuesday.

# Science & Technology

## Asteroid will pass in front of star to produce rare eclipse

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.** (AP)—One of the biggest and brightest stars in the night sky will momentarily vanish as an asteroid passes in front of it to produce a one-of-a-kind eclipse.

The rare and fleeting spectacle, late Monday into early Tuesday, should be visible to millions of people along a narrow path stretching from central Asia's Tajikistan and Armenia, across Turkey, Greece, Italy and Spain, to Miami and the Florida Keys and finally, to parts of Mexico.

The star is Betelgeuse, a red supergiant in the constellation Orion. The asteroid is Leona, a slowly rotating, oblong space rock in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.

Astronomers hope to learn more about Betelgeuse and Leona through the eclipse, which is expected to last no more than 15 seconds. By observing an eclipse of a much dimmer star by Leona in September, a Spanish-led team recently estimated the asteroid to be about 34 miles wide and 50 miles long (55 kilometers wide and 80 kilometers long).

There are lingering uncertainties over those predictions as well as the size of the star and its expansive atmosphere. It's unclear if the asteroid will obscure the entire star, producing a total eclipse. Rather, the result could be a "ring of fire" eclipse with a minuscule blazing border around the star. If it's a total eclipse, astronomers aren't

SCIENCE MATTERS

Writing analysis, not guesswork

Control handwriting sometimes fall apart because handwriting analysts don't identify what makes a person's writing unique. Our new software, however, identifies computer software for the handwriting analysis that produces a more accurate result.

1 In a test of the software, we fed it 1,000 samples of handwriting. The software analyzed each sample and identified the unique features of each sample. The software then compared the features of each sample to the features of the other samples. The software then identified the unique features of each sample. The software then identified the unique features of each sample.

2 Each handwriting sample is analyzed with an advanced algorithm. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample.

3 The computer analyzes each sample and identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample.

4 The computer analyzes each sample and identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample.

5 The computer analyzes each sample and identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample. The software then identifies the unique features of each sample.

sure how many seconds the star will disappear completely, perhaps up to 10 seconds.

"Which scenario we will see is uncertain, making the event even more intriguing," said astronomer Gianluca Masa, founder of the Virtual Telescope Project, which will provide a live webcast from Italy.

An estimated 700 light-years away, Betelgeuse is visible with the naked eye. Binoculars and small telescopes will enhance the view. A light-

year is 5.8 trillion miles.

Betelgeuse is thousands of times brighter than our sun and some 700 times bigger. It's so huge that if it replaced our sun, it would stretch beyond Jupiter, according to NASA.

At just 10 million years old, Betelgeuse is considerably younger than the 4.6 billion-year-old sun. Scientists expect Betelgeuse to be short-lived, given its mass and the speed at which it's burning through its material.

## 6-planet solar system in synchrony found

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.** (AP)—Astronomers have discovered a rare in-sync solar system with six planets moving like a grand cosmic orchestra, untouched by outside forces since their birth billions of years ago.

The find, announced Wednesday, can help explain how solar systems across the Milky Way galaxy came to be. This one is 100 light-years away in the constellation Coma Berenices. A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles.

A pair of planet-hunting satellites—NASA's TESS and the European Space Agency's CHEOPS—teamed up for the observations.

None of the planets in perfect synchrony are within the star's so-called habitable zone, which means little if any likelihood of life, at

least as we know it.

"Here we have a golden target" for comparison, said Adrien Leleu of the University of Geneva, who was part of an international team that published the results in the journal Nature.

This star, known as HD 110067, may have even more planets. The six found so far are roughly two to three times the size of Earth, but with densities closer to the gas giants in our own solar system. Their orbits range from nine to 54 days, putting them closer to their star than Venus is to the sun and making them exceedingly hot.

As gas planets, they're believed to have solid cores made of rock, metal or ice, enveloped by thick layers of hydrogen, according to the scientists. More observations are

needed to determine what's in their atmospheres.

This solar system is unique because all six planets move similar to a perfectly synchronized symphony, scientists said. In technical terms, it's known as resonance that's "precise, very orderly," said co-author Enric Pallé of the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands.

The innermost planet completes three orbits for every two by its closest neighbor. It's the same for the second- and third-closest planets, and the third- and fourth-closest planets.

The two outermost planets complete an orbit in 41 and 54.7 days, resulting in four orbits for every three. The innermost planet, meanwhile, completes six orbits in exactly the time the outermost completes one.



# Life & Style

## Pennsylvania is in its Taylor Swift era, her home state decides

**HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP)**—She’s Time magazine’s person of the year. She’s the most-played artist globally on Spotify. She’s helmed the first tour to gross more than \$1 billion and then the highest-grossing concert film of all time. And now Taylor Swift can add one more accolade: A state House of Representatives resolution is recognizing 2023 as the Taylor Swift

era in her home state of Pennsylvania. Lawmakers approved the resolution on Swift’s 34th birthday. Pennsylvania (Taylor’s Version) has benefited from her Midas touch over the past year, sponsors say. The frenzy for tickets to her tour prompted legislative action in the state—



and elsewhere, albeit slowly—to address Ticketmaster’s shortcomings. Swift buoyed the local economy on her tour stops in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and donated proceeds to hunger relief organizations as she blazed through. Nationally, she’s encouraged thousands of people to

register to vote, particularly young people. The pure heft of the Pennsylvania native turned Miss Americana has displayed musically, culturally and economically over the past year prompted the resolution. While the resolution had its naysayers, it passed 103-100. Speaker Rep. Joanna McClinton, a Democrat from

Philadelphia County, jested, “Haters gonna hate, hate, hate, hate, hate”—echoing the lyrics of Swift’s track “Shake It Off.” Most Republicans voted against the measure, as did a few Democrats. She has “transcended the role of pop star,” the resolution said. The resolution recognizes her accomplishments throughout the past year, saying she “shines as a role model of courage, self acceptance and self-determination, persisting in the face of personal and professional obstacles and challenges.” Swift grew up near West

Reading, in Berks County, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia. Part of her childhood was spent growing up on a Christmas tree farm, “where every wish comes true,” she sings in “Christmas Tree Farm.” Though she left Pennsylvania for Nashville to begin her music career as a teenager, she’s had other nods to the Commonwealth in her songs (“gold rush,” and “seven,” were surprise songs at her Pennsylvania stops on tour.) And her home state hasn’t forgotten her. A mural commemorating the artist’s youth was posted in her hometown this summer, claiming her as “Reading’s own.”

## ‘Apollo 13,’ ‘Home Alone’ picked for national registry

By JOCELYN NOVECK  
AP National Writer

Houston, we have a problem: Where’s Kevin? Perhaps the ultimate coming-home movie, “Apollo 13,” and the ultimate staying-home one, “Home Alone,” are both being honored this year, selected for preservation in the National Film Registry. They’re part of an annual group of 25 that this year spans more than 90 years of filmmaking. The 2023 collection includes the sci-fi sequel “Terminator 2: Judgment Day,” the Disney animated classic “Lady and the Tramp,” and the searing, Oscar-winning drama “12 Years a Slave.” Just in time for the holidays, “The Nightmare Before Christmas” is included. The oldest film is from 1921: “A Movie Trip Through Filmland,” a very early look at the impact of movies. The newest are both from 2013: “12 Years a Slave” and the Oscar-winning documentary “20 Feet From Stardom,” about backup singers. The registry is housed at the Library of Congress, which

since 1988 has selected movies for preservation based on their cultural and historic importance. The current picks bring the registry to 875 films — some, but not all, among the 2 million items in the library’s collection. Turner Classic Movies will host a TV special on Thursday, screening a selection of this year’s movies.

**A look at some of the films entering the registry**  
“The Wedding Banquet” (1993): Ang Lee’s romantic comedy about a gay man from Taiwan trying to hide his orientation from his family, featuring an over-the-top wedding banquet.  
“Bamboozled” (2000): Spike Lee’s stinging satire about race in entertainment, with Damon Wayans as a program executive at a cable network.  
“Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision” (1994): Freida Lee Mock’s Oscar-winning documentary about the artist who created two famous memorials.  
“Apollo 13” (1995): Ron Howard’s impeccably told

chronicle of the near-tragedy involving U.S. astronauts trying to get back to Earth, featuring Tom Hanks and the famous (and slightly altered) quote: “Houston, we have a problem.”  
“Desperately Seeking Susan” (1985): Susan Seidelman’s uniquely New York saga featuring Rosanna Arquette and none other than Madonna as the elusive Susan.  
“Matewan” (1987): John Sayles’ tale of efforts in 1920 to unionize a company town in West Virginia.  
“Home Alone” (1990): Chris Columbus’ holiday classic about, let’s face it, deeply questionable parenting that made wide-eyed Macaulay Culkin — aka Kevin — a star.  
“Alambrista” (1977): Robert M. Young’s story of a Mexican migrant laborer in the United States.  
“Fame” (1980): A story of students seeking fame at the High School of Performing Arts in New York City, and known for Irene Cara’s version of the title song.  
“Lady and the Tramp”

(1955): The classic Disney canine love story, featuring surely the most famous spaghetti kiss in animated film.  
**The Full List**  
“A Movie Trip Through Filmland” (1921); “Dinner at Eight” (1933); “Bohulano Family Film Collection” (1950s-1970s); “Helen Keller: In Her Story” (1954); “Lady and the Tramp” (1955); “Edge of the City” (1957); “We’re Alive” (1974); “Cruisin’ J-Town” (1975); “Alambrista” (1977); “Passing Through” (1977); “Fame” (1980); “Desperately Seeking Susan” (1985); “The Lighted Field” (1987); “Matewan” (1987); “Home Alone” (1990); “Queen of Diamonds” (1991); “Terminator 2: Judgment Day” (1991); “The Nightmare Before Christmas” (1993); “The Wedding Banquet” (1993); “Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision” (1994); “Apollo 13” (1995); “Bamboozled” (2000); “Love & Basketball” (2000); “12 Years a Slave” (2013); “20 Feet From Stardom” (2013).

## Trevor Noah will host the 2024 Grammy Awards for 4th time

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—As the age-old adage goes, don’t mess with success. The Grammy Awards aren’t, bringing Trevor Noah back as host in 2024. Noah shared the news Wednesday night on his podcast “What Now? With Trevor Noah.” For those keeping count, the 66th Grammys will mark his fourth consecutive year of hosting duties. SZA heads into the 2024 ceremony with a leading nine nominations. “Kill Bill,” her revenge anthem cloaked in an R&B ballad, earned her nods for record of the year, song of the year,



and best R&B performance. “SOS” is also up for album of the year and best progressive R&B album. The 2024 ceremony is the second time SZA has been nominated for record, album, and song in the same year. Phoebe Bridgers has the second-most nominations, with seven. Six of those are with her band boygenius. Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo, Miley Cyrus, Billie Eilish, Brandy Clark, Jon Batiste and producer Jack Antonoff also earned six. The 2024 Grammy Awards will air Feb. 4 live on CBS and Paramount+ from the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles.

## Fishing pal turns out to be the bigger catch

**DEAR ABBY:** I have been involved with a man I met online. We texted and talked for months before we met. He told me he had a lady friend he goes fishing with. He said she was just a friend. On our first Valentine’s Day, he gave me a teddy bear that said, “I love you.” I started developing deep feelings for him, but he then informed me that he loves her. I tried several times to walk away, but he kept pulling me back. I don’t know if he doesn’t want to hurt her or if he just loves having two women in his life. I know about her, but she doesn’t know about me. Should I contact her and let her know? What is the right thing to do?  
TWO-TIMED IN NORTH CAROLINA  
**DEAR TWO-TIMED:** The right thing to do is to walk away from this person—and stay away. He lied to you when he told you his fishing buddy was just a friend. Now that you know their relationship is more than that, run!  
**DEAR ABBY:** My parents announced during their recent visit that they are planning to move here. Because of a laundry list of complaints, including them being snippy to serving staff in restaurants, my wife has decided she never wants to visit with them again. My inheritance from my parents is my only hope of being able to retire. What do I do?  
CORNERED IN THE SOUTH

**DEAR CORNERED:** That the reason you won’t tell your parents not to move closer is the inheritance you expect to get from them is sad, not only for them, but also for you and your wife. Explain the facts of life to your missus and make clear that you expect her to show your parents the same respect you have shown to hers. She probably won’t have to see them as often as you will, but she can’t write them off entirely because of the financial impact it will have on you. Then cross everything you have two of that at the last moment they don’t donate their money elsewhere.  
**DEAR ABBY:** My neighbor “Doris” runs our neighborhood group that has in-person meetings once a year. She didn’t have any meetings in person or even on Zoom for three years during COVID. Two weeks ago, she contacted me and asked me to come to the next meeting. I told her I didn’t want to because at the last meeting I wasn’t able to ask all the questions I wanted of city hall officials. Doris apologized several times and assured me it would not happen again. Last week, I attended the meeting, and they had a sheriff’s deputy speak. We were told we could ask questions, so when it was my turn, I began asking questions -- and Doris cut me off and censored me! I saw later that evening that she tried to call me, but I feel it would be redundant to have the same conversation with her. What do I do now that I have been

## DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



burned twice by her behavior?  
BEEN THERE, DONE THAT  
**DEAR BEEN THERE:** You have two choices. Either stop attending those meetings or, because you feel Doris is too controlling, oppose her leadership, run for that position (if you have the time to devote to it) and ask your neighbors for their votes. It may be time for the “winds of change” to blow through your neighborhood.  
**What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in “What Every Teen Should Know.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)**



# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



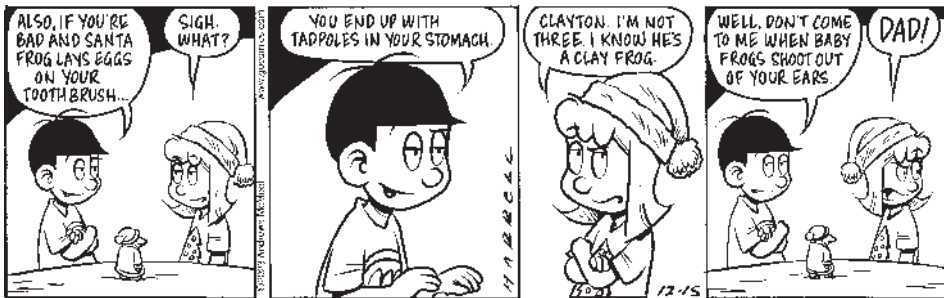
## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Early block? 43 Writer's block? 3 "Babes in —" 21 Mess up

6 Hot tub 44 Jai — 4 Bailiwick 22 Picnic

9 Dallas sch. 45 Mexican liquor 5 "Don't You Know" singer 24 Ball club

12 Emporium 47 Floral wreath Della 26 Fine point

13 Crucial 49 Emulate Frederick 6 Circumvents 28 Bridge call

14 Atlas page 52 Texas tea 7 Chest muscles, briefly 30 " — outta here!"

15 Check recipient 53 Decay 54 Major exam 32 "Rodeo" composer

16 Reykjavik's country 55 Rds. 9 Brainy 33 Ms. Aaron

18 Surgical beams debut 56 Wall St. 10 Parson's home 34 TV's Danson

20 Approximately 57 Loses color 11 High hairstyles 36 Deceived

21 Ecol. watchdog 1 Recipe abbr. 19 They hang around houses? 38 Palm starches

23 Dig in 24 Partners 25 Peel 27 Winner's gesture 29 Night flight 31 Already sliced 35 Inventor Nikola 37 Apple variety 38 Asparagus unit 41 Mag. edition

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

A	D	A	M	V	I	P	A	V	O	N
S	I	L	O	E	M	U	N	E	R	O
F	V	F	I	R	A	M	A	R	C	O
C	A	S	A	B	A	P	A	C	M	A
M	A	V	S	R	E	C	B	I	O	
C	R	E	U	K	E	T	R	I		
S	P	R	I	Z	E	H	S	H	E	D
O	R	A	B	R	A					
D	E	N	I	R	O	I	N	T	L	N
O	T	I	S	P	E	A	U	S	E	R
R	A	C	E	R	G	R	A	R	E	
A	L	A	S	N	A	E	N	U	D	E

**DOWN**

1 Recipe abbr. 19 They hang around houses? 38 Palm starches

2 One-time link 20 Approximately 21 Ecol. watchdog 23 Dig in 24 Partners 25 Peel 27 Winner's gesture 29 Night flight 31 Already sliced 35 Inventor Nikola 37 Apple variety 38 Asparagus unit 41 Mag. edition

**Yesterday's answer 12-15**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13				14	
15					16				17	
	18				19				20	
21	22			23				24		
25		26		27		28				
29			30			31		32	33	34
			35			36		37		
38	39	40			41		42		43	
44				45			46			
47			48				49		50	51
52				53			54			
55				56			57			

## STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Maude Apatow, 26; Adam Brody, 44; Julie Taymor, 71; Don Johnson, 74.

**Happy Birthday:** Take responsibilities seriously, and handle your finances with care. Don't rely on others to offer sound advice or live up to impossible promises. Being ready, willing and able to get things done physically will put your mind at rest and encourage you to be fully responsible for your achievements and happiness. Trust yourself and take nothing for granted; you won't be disappointed in your returns. Your numbers are 4, 15, 23, 31, 35, 39, 44.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Learn from your mistakes. Take a reserved approach to sensitive situations. Direct your energy wisely and map out your plan before you head out to shop or attend festivities. Don't feel inclined to take on or deny yourself something to appease others. \*\*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Say no to temptation. It's the festive season, and getting caught up in the hustle and bustle and spending more than you can afford are easy. Put a budget together and a plan in place to prevent a costly emotional, financial or physical setback. \*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Take good care of your possessions, money and secrets. Nurture relationships that matter to you, and distance yourself from those you cannot trust. If you use your imagination when trying to solve a dilemma, you'll outmaneuver anyone who tries to lead you astray. \*\*\*\*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Play to win. Explore the possibilities and plant yourself where the action is, and something good

will transpire. Use your knowledge, experience and skills to outmaneuver anyone who challenges you or tries to compete with you. Choose gratitude as your guide and erase negativity from your mind. \*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Challenge yourself. Work-related festivities will allow you to network. Show compassion and loyalty, and someone will see your potential. Update your image and dress for success, and you won't go unnoticed. Control your emotions, regardless of what others do or say. \*\*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Don't let emotions interfere with business. You may not agree with or like what transpires in the workplace, but a positive attitude will help more than anger or getting chippy with a superior. Be productive. \*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Don't get stuck in someone else's dream. Put your energy into your happiness and engage in events and pursuits that bring you closer to your destination of choice. Say no to situations that no longer work for you and build the life you desire. \*\*

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Speak from the heart. Transparency will lead to stability at home and within meaningful relationships. Discuss your true feelings and intentions; the feedback you receive will end the uncertainty and stress of pretenses. Embrace truth, love and happiness. \*\*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** A miscalculation will leave you wondering what to do next. Look at your alternatives, and you'll find how to use your skills to compensate for any discrepancy you encounter. Make your words sparse and your actions count. \*\*\*

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Take advantage of a financial opportunity. You can bolster your way forward using ingenuity and common sense. Speak the truth and follow through. Protect what you have worked so hard to accumulate and implement the changes that honor personal growth and a better lifestyle. \*\*\*

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Follow your heart and put your energy where it contributes to what you want to unfold. Don't feel slighted if someone takes a different path. It's OK to go separate ways and connect when the timing is better. Acceptance and gratitude are essential. \*\*\*

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Don't jump to conclusions or pick a fight. Be grateful and willing to help others. Be the one to calm the waters and offer peace and love to those you encounter. Your attitude will lead to gifts and gains far beyond your expectations. \*\*\*\*

**Birthday Baby:** You are intense, secretive and disciplined. You are adventuresome and talented.

☉: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☽: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

				9						
6					8	2			3	
	7			3	5					
	8		7				9			
					6				8	
7							1	4		
					2	5		6		
1				7	3		2	9		

Difficulty: ★★★★★

12/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	9	6	8	1	3	4	2	7
3	8	1	7	4	2	9	5	6
4	2	7	6	9	5	3	8	1
2	5	8	4	6	1	7	3	9
6	7	9	5	3	8	2	1	4
1	4	3	9	2	7	5	6	8
7	1	4	2	5	6	8	9	3
8	3	2	1	7	9	6	4	5
9	6	5	3	8	4	1	7	2

Difficulty: ★★

12/14

## WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

POTATO PANCAKES

Solution: 8 letters

G B A P P L E S A U C E M H B  
R E S G G E B N I D H A T A K  
A A M A T Z O E R D E P K N E  
T N N T U B A K E R E I S U T  
E S E C U S U S C F N L R K C  
D U T J H N A R I G I F E K H  
H G T A E L U G P K A C V A U  
R A A M T O R O E R R O H P  
E R L G S G W U S D I S N T  
D E F O O D P R O C E S S O R  
D S E L E U M E A L A P A C U  
D E D R J E L L Y L F Y P A G  
R E D N E L B A M I L I O B O  
N H S N O I N O S E K T A L Y  
H C R A T S N H C H I C K E N

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12/15

Applesauce, Bacon, Bake, Baking Powder, Beans, Beef, Blender, Boil, Cheese, Chicken, Cook, Crispy, Drain, Eggs, Fish, Flatten, Flip, Flour, Food Processor, Golden, Goulash, Grated, Hanukkah, Jam, Jelly, Katahdin, Ketchup, Latkes, Matzo, Meal, Menu, Nutmeg, Onions, Passover, Ranch, Recipes, Salmon, Salt, Sausage, Side, Sour Cream, Starch, Sugar, Yogurt  
**Yesterday's Answer: Packaging**  
The NEW TELEVISION VINTAGE COLLECTION #1 can be purchased on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367.



# Giannis scores franchise-record 64 points to help Bucks beat Pacers



**MILWAUKEE** (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo scored a franchise-record 64 points to help the Milwaukee Bucks outscore the Indiana Pacers 140-126 on Wednesday night.

Antetokounmpo broke the team record of 57 set by Michael Redd in 2006 in a 113-111 loss to the Utah Jazz. Antetokounmpo's previous career high was 55 in a 123-113 victory over Washington in January 2023. He had 54 at Indiana on Nov. 9.

Antetokounmpo was 20 of 28 from the field, made 24 of 32 free throws and had 14 rebounds.

Antetokounmpo was tackled by Aaron Nesmith on a play underneath with 10:10 remaining, setting off a brief heated exchange involving several players. Nesmith was called for a flagrant-1, and Nesmith and the Bucks' Bobby Portis were assessed technical fouls. Portis was later called for a second technical and ejected with 9:13 remaining, finishing with 19 points.

Damian Lillard added 21 points for the Bucks.

Tyrese Haliburton and Myles Turner had 22 points apiece for the Pacers, who beat the Bucks 128-119 in the semifinals of the In-Season Tournament on Thursday night.



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo drives by Indiana Pacers' Buddy Hield during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, in Milwaukee.

## 76ERS 129, PISTONS 111

**DETROIT** (AP)—Joel Embiid scored 30 of his 41 points in the first half and Philadelphia handed Detroit its 21st straight loss to open a home-and-home series.

Detroit matched the longest streak in franchise history, set at the end of the 1979-80 sea-

son and start of 1980-81. It is the sixth-longest single-season losing streak in the NBA.

Only the 2010-11 Cleveland Cavaliers and the 2013-14 76ers (both lost 26 straight), along with the 1995-96 Vancouver Grizzlies, the 1997-98 Denver Nuggets and the 2011-12 Charlotte Bobcats (all lost 23 in a row) have lost more

games in a row in a season. Philadelphia holds the overall mark of 28, set at the end of 2014-15 and start of 2015-16.

Detroit dropped to 2-22, with the teams set to meet again Friday night in Philadelphia. Bojan Bogdanovic led the Pistons with 33 points.

## LAKERS 122,

## SPURS 119

**SAN ANTONIO** (AP)—Anthony Davis had 37 points and 10 rebound and Los Angeles held off Victor Wembanyama and San Antonio, extending the Spurs' franchise-record losing streak to 18.

The Lakers were without LeBron James, with the four-time MVP sitting out the first of two straight games in San Antonio because of left calf injury. The teams will meet again Friday night.

Wembanyama had 30 points, 13 rebounds and six blocks for San Antonio, which has not won since Nov. 2. Keldon Johnson added 28 points, and Malaki Branham had 16.

## NETS 116, SUNS 112

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Cam Thomas scored 24 points, Mikal Bridges added 21 in his return to the desert and Brooklyn spoiled the debut of Phoenix's All-Star trio.

The Nets have won seven of their past nine.

It was the first time this season—in the 24th game—that Phoenix's Kevin Durant, Devin Booker and Bradley Beal played on the same night. The trio's debut was delayed because of various injuries, particularly Beal's sore back, which has limited him to five games this season.

Booker had 34 points and 12 assists, Durant added 27 points and Beal had 14. Jusuf Nurkic had 15 points and a season-high 22 rebounds.

## PELICANS 142, WIZARDS 122

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Brandon Ingram scored a season-high 40 points, Trey Murphy III added six 3-pointers

and 27 points and short-handed New Orleans had its best offensive showing of the season to rout Washington.

CJ McCollum had 22 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 16 points and 18 rebounds. Zion Williamson sat out because of a sprained ankle.

Kyle Kuzma scored 27 points for Washington. The Wizards lost for the 20th time in 23 games, the fastest the team has reached that loss total since the 2012-13 season.

## HEAT 115, HORNETS 104

**MIAMI** (AP)—Duncan Robinson scored 23 points, Jaime Jaquez Jr. and Kyle Lowry each added 17 and Miami beat Charlotte to finish off a two-game home-and-home sweep.

Lowry was perfect shooting—5 for 5 from the floor, 4 for 4 of those on 3-pointers and 3 for 3 from the line. Jimmy Butler had 15 points and 10 assists.

Terry Rozier scored 28 points for Charlotte.

## JAZZ 117, KNICKS 113

**SALT LAKE CITY** (AP)—Collin Sexton scored a season-high 26 points, Lauri Markkanen punctuated his return to the court with 23 points and Utah beat New York.

After missing eight games because of a strained left hamstring, Markkanen scored both inside and on the perimeter and was only slowed by a minutes restriction. In 25 minutes, Markkanen went 7 for 13 from the field, had four 3s and eight rebounds.

Julius Randle had 32 points and 12 rebounds for New York.

## RAPTORS 135, HAWKS 128

**TORONTO** (AP)—Pascal Siakam scored 33 points, Scottie Barnes had 27 points and 10 rebounds and Toronto beat Atlanta to end a four-game losing streak.

O.G. Anunoby added 22 points for the Raptors in the opener of a two-game home set against the Hawks. Trae Young scored 35 points and matched a season high with 17 assists, but Atlanta's season-worst losing streak reached five.

The teams will meet again Friday night in Toronto.

## ROCKETS 117, GRIZZLIES 104

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Tari Eason scored a career-high 25 points, Jabari Smith Jr. added 20 points and 10 rebounds and Houston beat Memphis to extended its home winning streak to 11.

Eason came off the bench to shoot 10 for 16 and matched a career high with 14 rebounds.

Jaren Jackson Jr. had a career-high 44 points for Memphis.

# Warriors star Draymond Green suspended indefinitely by NBA

**SAN FRANCISCO** (AP)—Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green was suspended indefinitely by the NBA on Wednesday, less than 24 hours after he hit Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic in the face and received a Flagrant 2 foul and ejection.

The league said the penalty handed down by operations chief Joe Dumars begins immediately. This is already Green's second suspension this season.

"He will be required to meet certain league and team conditions before he returns to play," the league said.

The NBA noted that "this outcome takes into account Green's repeated history of unsportsmanlike acts."

The Warriors didn't have a statement Wednesday but said Green's suspension would be addressed at shootaround Thursday in Los Angeles ahead of a game against the Clippers.

The 33-year-old Green, part of four Warriors championships, was ejected for the 18th time in his career—most among active NBA players.

As the Warriors were inbound the ball near their own bench early in the third quarter in a 119-116 loss at

Phoenix, Green and Nurkic were fighting for position near the baseline corner and the two tangled. Green appeared to slip slightly then pivoted around right into Nurkic with his right arm connecting with the big man's face.

Nurkic fell to the ground instantly and stayed down briefly before getting up to remain in the game.

"That had nothing to do with basketball," Nurkic said. "I'm just out there trying to play basketball."

Green was suspended five games by the NBA for putting Minnesota's Rudy Gobert into a headlock during an altercation in November.

There is little precedent for an indefinite suspension. In 2010, then-Commissioner David Stern suspended Washington guard Gilbert Arenas indefinitely for bringing firearms into the team locker room. That was a precursor to what became a 50-game suspension for Arenas, after Stern said "his ongoing conduct ... led me to conclude that he is not currently fit to take the court in an NBA game."

Last season during training camp, Green took a leave of absence from the 2022 NBA

champions in what coach Steve Kerr called a "mutual decision" after the star forward violently punched then-teammate Jordan Poole in the face. Neither player was injured.

New Warriors general manager Mike Dunleavy said when he got the job after last season ended that he was committed to keeping Green, who then shortly after received a new \$100 million, four-year contract in late June. Kerr has always said he loves Green's fiery, push-the-limits style of play — but it will be interesting to see how both sides come through this latest discipline.

Last spring, Green was suspended for a Game 3 playoff win against the Sacramento Kings after stepping on the chest of Domantas Sabonis during a Game 2 defeat. The Warriors became the first defending champion to rally from an 0-2 deficit to win a playoff series.

Golden State suspended Green for one game in November 2018 for conduct detrimental to the team. In the closing seconds of regulation during a 121-116 overtime loss on the road to the Clippers, Green secured a rebound and with Kevin Durant calling for the ball instead dribbled the length of the

court into traffic and lost control as the Warriors failed to get a shot off. Durant was shown on camera visibly upset and the two got into it afterward.

In 2016, Green was suspended for a crucial Game 5 loss to LeBron James and the Cavaliers in the NBA Finals after accumulating too many flagrant fouls in the playoffs that season. The Warriors wound up losing in seven games. Then-GM Bob Myers sat with Green next door to Oracle Arena at the Oakland Coliseum for that game Green missed.

A second-round draft pick in 2012 out of Michigan State, Green is averaging 9.7 points, 5.8 assists and 5.5 rebounds in 15 games this season. He has repeatedly said recently how chemistry is much-improved this season. Poole was traded to Washington on draft day for Chris Paul.

Green said "it was hard to come to work" and "not fun."

"Last year we had an awful team as far as chemistry goes—pathetic," he said. "You look at last year and say, 'Ah man, this team hasn't lost a Western Conference series under Steve Kerr.' And then it happens. The big reason why is our chemistry sucked."



# Ohtani can opt out of deal if execs Walter, Friedman lose roles with team



LOS ANGELES (AP) —

Shohei Ohtani can opt out of his \$700 million, 10-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers if either of two key executives is no longer in place, a person familiar with the agreement told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Ohtani, who will be formally introduced by the Dodgers at a news conference Thursday, would be allowed to terminate his deal if Mark Walter no longer is controlling owner or president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman no longer is with the team, the person said. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the terms were not announced.

Ohtani's deal, announced Monday, provides that 97% of the money be deferred without interest and not fully paid until 2043.

The Athletic first reported Wednesday that Ohtani's deal contained a provision allowing him to opt out at the end of a season if the Dodgers made specific personnel changes.

The deal is still in the form of a letter of agreement between Ohtani's representatives and the team, and a formal contract has not been submitted to Major League Baseball, the person said.

Led by Walter, the private partnership Guggenheim Baseball Management purchased the Dodgers in 2012 for \$2.15 billion. In his early years as controlling owner, Walter was a regular at Dodger Stadium. But his presence gradually decreased and last



Customers shop around for character goods of Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Dodgers at a sporting goods store, "SELECTION," in Shinjuku district Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, in Tokyo.

season he attended only a handful of games.

Walter's global financial services company, Guggenheim Partners, has headquarters in Chicago and New York. He is a native of Iowa.

Friedman was hired by the Dodgers in 2014 after spending a decade with the Tampa Bay Rays. He gradually rebuilt that franchise and the team reached the World

Series in 2008 despite operating with one of the sport's lowest payrolls.

Friedman has an enviable record in Los Angeles, with the Dodgers winning nine division titles under his leadership, three NL pennants and the 2020 World Series during the pandemic-shortened season. He overhauled the club's farm system and reorganized and expanded the front office.

Ohtani's contract calls for annual salaries of \$70 million and of each year's salary, \$68 million is deferred with no interest, payable in equal installments each July 1 from 2034-43.

MLB proposed as part of bargaining on June 21, 2021, to ban deferred compensation, but the union rejected the concept and MLB dropped it.

Ohtani will be introduced

during a news conference in Dodger Stadium's Centerfield Plaza starting at 3 p.m. PST.

MLB reported Wednesday that Ohtani broke Fanatics' record for the highest jersey sales within the first 48 hours of a release, topping soccer stars Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. Ohtani was out of sight at the stadium on Wednesday, meeting with teammates, including seven-time All-Star outfielder Mookie Betts and reliever Joe Kelly.

"I had a chance to talk to him," Kelly said, surrounded by kids attending an outdoor holiday party with music blaring. "He was already working out, already grinding, getting bigger and stronger. His arm looked good to me."

Ohtani's deal includes a full no-trade provision and provides for a hotel suite on road trips, a premium luxury suite for home games and a fulltime interpreter. Ohtani will donate to the Dodgers' charity an amount not to exceed 1%.

Ohtani last spoke with reporters on Aug. 9, two weeks before a pitching injury that required surgery and will keep him off a mound until 2025. He had the operation on Sept. 19, but the nature of the surgery was not fully announced. Ohtani had Tommy John surgery on Oct. 1, 2018.

A unique two-way star as both a hitter and pitcher, the 29-year-old left the Los Angeles Angels as a free agent after six years.

Kelly is switching uniform

numbers after finalizing his \$8 million, one-year contract with the team on Monday, opening No. 17 for Ohtani, who thanked him for the gesture.

"I wasn't going to give it up to just anybody," Kelly said. "If Shohei keeps performing, he'll be a future Hall of Famer and I'll be able to have my number retired. That's the closest I'll get to the Hall of Fame."

Asked what Ohtani was giving him in return, Kelly said, "Oh, there's a list, but no comment."

Ohtani spoke infrequently to the media during his years in Anaheim, leaving his teammates to be peppered with questions about the enigmatic superstar.

Kelly said he was prepared to entertain Ohtani questions "maybe once a week."

Ohtani's move from Anaheim to Hollywood has sent fans on both sides of the Pacific Ocean flocking to buy Dodgers merchandise and inquire about tickets on the secondary market. The team has yet to begin single-game ticket sales for next season.

"It's going to be sold out every game," Kelly said. "Every game that we're a part of is going to be like a playoff atmosphere."

Ahead of his 30th birthday on July 5, Ohtani has a .274 batting average with 171 homers, 437 RBIs and 86 stolen bases along with a 39-19 record with a 3.01 ERA and 608 strikeouts in 481 2/3 innings. Ohtani has 34.7 Wins Above Replacement (WAR), per Baseball Reference.

"I think all around it's a good gig for both parties," Kelly said. "The Dodgers are competitive every year and this is one of those things, he's the highest-paid player in all of sports, and we're still going to be able to add to our team every single year he's a Dodger."

There are three different evaluations of what the contract is worth in present-day dollars.

■ For purposes of the luxury tax, a 4.43% discount rate is used and the value is \$460,767,685. That is the federal mid-term rate as defined in Section 1274(d) of the Internal Revenue Code, using the October 2023 rate. The figure means the Dodgers' luxury tax payroll will be charged about \$46.1 million annually for Ohtani.

■ For purposes of MLB regular payrolls, a 10% discount rate is used and the value is \$282,107,876. That is the J.P. Morgan Chase prime rate plus 1% rounded to the nearest full percentage point, as defined in Article XV (K) of the collective bargaining agreement.

■ The players' association evaluated the contract at \$437,830,563.

## Deflecting questions about long-term deal, Soto looks forward to playing with Yankees in 2024

NEW YORK (AP)—Juan Soto put on a New York Yankees cap for a Zoom news conference.

"It's just a different feeling," he said Tuesday, looking ahead to a Bronx fan base that is devoted, demanding and demeaning. "Definitely just a great vibe, a great feeling to be playing in New York and in that stadium—the fans, the crowd is just incredible. Even when they weren't cheering for me, they were really booing me and everything. I really enjoyed my time there. It was pretty cool for me."

Soto spoke six days after he was acquired by the Yankees from San Diego along with Gold Glove center fielder Trent Grisham for right-handed pitchers Michael King, Jhony Brito, Randy Vásquez and Drew Thorpe plus catcher Kyle Higashioka.

The three-time All-Star outfielder, who turned 25 in October, is projected to earn about

\$32 million next season and can become a free agent after the World Series.

Soto was playing Nintendo when Padres general manager A.J. Preller called to tell him of the trade to New York, coming off its worst season since 1992. He deflected questions about a possible long-term deal with the Yankees, saying the team can deal with his agent, Scott Boras.

"I have one of the best agents in the league, so I think I put everything on him and let him do his magic for me," Soto said. "Any contract stuff, they know where to call and who to talk to."

Speaking from Miami, wearing a chain with his No. 22 dangling, Soto said he was looking forward to seeing how big 6-foot-7 Aaron Judge and 6-foot-6 Giancarlo Stanton appear from up close. Soto said Judge, Gerit Cole, Anthony Rizzo and Gleyber Torres either got in

touch or left messages.

Soto has four homers in six career games and 23 at-bats in Yankee Stadium. He homered twice on June 13, 2018, a go-ahead, three-run shot just over the wall in the left-field corner against Sonny Gray and a 436-foot tiebreaking drive over the Yankees bullpen in right-center against Chasen Shreve. Soto hit a 424-foot shot into the visitor's bullpen in left against Luis Cessa on May 7, 2021; and a 432-foot drive into the right field second deck off Vásquez on May 26.

Born in the Dominican Republic, Soto looks forward to playing regularly in front of a fan base with many Dominicans, in a area where uncles and friends live.

"It's a great ballpark. It's a great batter's box. It feels great to stand up there," Soto said.

New York finished with a .227 batting average, 29th among the 30 teams, and was 25th in runs with 673. The

Yankees have added three left-handed hitters in Soto, Grisham and Alex Verdugo.

Soto hit .275 with 35 homers, 109 RBIs and a .930 OPS in his only full season with the Padres, who obtained him from Washington on Aug. 2, 2022, after he turned down a \$440 million, 15-year offer from the Nationals.

Adjusting to the pitch clock took time.

"I feel more comfortable with it. I really didn't like it at the beginning of spring training," he said. "I take my time and I like to think what I'm going to do on a play."

Soto has a .284 batting average with 160 homers, 483 RBIs and a .946 OPS in six major league seasons, winning a World Series title with Washington in 2019.

"I'm more than excited to go from one team that has the chance to win a championship to another one," he said. "Winning, that's all I care about. I come to the field thinking about winning every day, and that's what I wanted to do. I got a little taste of it in 2019."



# Raiders' coach, GM, president are Black—a first for the NFL



**HENDERSON, Nev.** (AP)—When Las Vegas Raiders owner Mark Davis

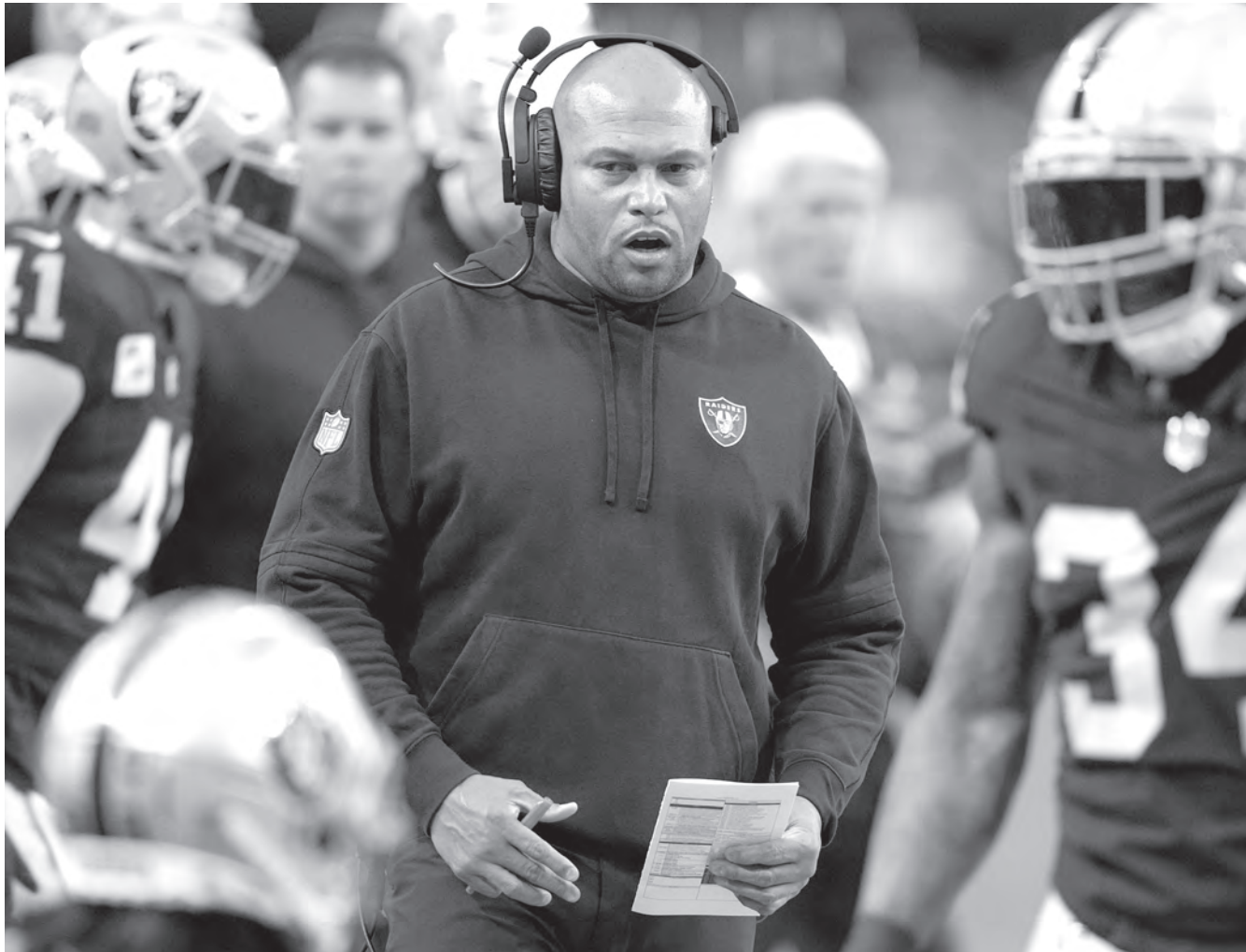
fired coach Josh McDaniels and general manager Dave Ziegler on Halloween night, he also made history by naming Antonio Pierce as the interim coach and Champ Kelly as the acting GM.

Those actions made the Raiders the first NFL team in which Black people occupied the three key leadership positions below owner—coach, GM and president. Team president Sandra Douglass Morgan is one of the few women in authority in the league.

"I don't take it lightly," Pierce said. "There are not many people from my background, grew up from where I grew up (Compton, California), to be in front of this stage, to have this kind of responsibility."

Pierce said he grew up a Raiders fan and pointed out the organization—whether it was based in Las Vegas, Oakland or Los Angeles—has a history of being a trailblazer. Kelly and Douglass Morgan noted that Hall of Fame owner Al Davis—Mark Davis' father—set the standard going back to 1989 when Art Shell became the NFL's first Black head coach in the Super Bowl era.

Tom Flores, who is Mexican American, became the first minority head coach to win a Super Bowl when he guided the Raiders to the championship in the 1980 season and then won a second one three years later. He was inducted



Las Vegas Raiders interim head coach Antonio Pierce walks the sidelines during the first half of an NFL football game against the Minnesota Vikings, Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023, in Las Vegas.

into the Pro Football Hall of Fame two years ago.

As far as the ultimate on-field leadership position, Kelly noted the Raiders became the first to draft a Black quarterback in the first round when they selected Eldridge Dickey in 1968.

"The Raiders have long been a leader in diversity in professional sports, and the NFL would not be what it is today without Al Davis," Kelly said in a statement to The

Associated Press. "Therefore, it is no surprise that the Raiders under Mark Davis are the first franchise with a Black head coach, president and general manager. Personally, I couldn't be prouder to be a part of this leadership group."

The Raiders also were the first team to appoint a woman as president when Amy Trask was hired in 1997. Douglass Morgan was hired in July 2022, making her the first Black woman to hold that po-

sition in the NFL.

"I think there's additional responsibility (as a woman) any time you are not what the common person looks like who fills that role," Douglass Morgan told The AP in an interview. "So I think there's definitely a responsibility making sure you're not the last. That's the goal, to not be the last whether it's being a woman of color or a woman itself. It's a challenge, but I have to focus on what the job

is, and that's to be the best president of the Raiders."

Pierce and Kelly have similar mandates.

Pierce has to figure out a way to get the Raiders (5-8) out of a three-game losing streak, beginning with Thursday night's home game against the Los Angeles Char-

gers. Even if he gets the team moving in the right direction, he is far from guaranteed of getting the job on a full-time basis once Davis opens up the coaching search.

Kelly is in a similar spot, trying to show now he is the one who should be fully in charge of making the roster playoff worthy.

Those decisions will come soon enough.

As for now, Las Vegas star wide receiver Davante Adams said the current makeup of those leadership positions should be noted, but the fact it is a story also is something that needs to be rectified.

"Hopefully, we get to a point where we don't even need to acknowledge it — not here but just in the world," Adams said. "It'd be cool to just have a Black president and it just be the president, it's just a normal thing, that's the ultimate goal."

In the meantime, Adams said, the Raiders' leadership should serve as an inspiration to young people who otherwise wouldn't have such role models to try to emulate.

Pierce made a similar point.

"I do look at myself as somebody who can be a leader and an example for the other children wherever they may be in the world that, listen, you could do it," Pierce said. "If I did it, I know you could do it. Guarantee that. So, hopefully, they believe in a dream like I did and work their (butts) off to get there."

## TAN

From page 24

Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games.

"When we had the Pacific Games Council general assembly on Saipan last year during the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games, the Solomon Islands organizers made a presentation about the expected number of participants from each country for the 2023 Pacific Games. NMI's number was 30 athletes and officials. I said, that can't be. We're coming to a close of successfully hosting the Mini Games with over 150 NMI athletes and officials and a record-breaking performance in the medal standings. I understand that in the past when the Pacific Games or Mini Games is held

in the South Pacific, we tend to have a small delegation. However, with the commitment from the athletes, coaches, and their national federations, and the strong support from the business community, we were able to have a charter flight to Solomon Islands and brought our number up. We sent 102 athletes and officials to the 2023 Pacific Games. That's the highlight of our participation to the 2023 Pacific Games. We're able to provide opportunities to compete and experience the uniqueness of the Pacific Games to more than 100 athletes and officials."

In a way, Tan admitted that the CNMI doing well on the medal tally was just the icing on the cake in terms of the delegation's participation in the quadrennial event.

"We won medals, 13 medals, plus some national records and a Pacific Games record. These are bonuses for us, something we did not expect. Our Team Marianas overachieved, resulting to the NMI earning its most gold medals (five golds) in the history of our participation to Pacific Games."

Tan then shared Team Marianas' success to all stakeholders and everyone who had a part in supporting the athletes and officials' participation in the Honiara Games.

"When we aim to send more delegates to the 2023 Pacific Games, we used the phrase 'shared responsibility;' to rally the community to support our Team Marianas. Indeed, individuals and organizations stepped up and chipped in. We

are deeply grateful to the companies that provided strong support to Team Marianas by sharing the costs of the charter flight to the Solomon Islands. Thank you Joeten Daidai Foundation, Triple J, Crowne Plaza Resort, IT&E, IP&E, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Mobil, Tan Holdings, and McDonald's of Guam & Saipan."

Tan also extended his gratitude to the national federations for their leadership, to the athletes, officials, and their families for making the sacrifices during the training and the competitions.

"Thank you to CNMI chef de mission Nick Gross for holding the team together in the Solomons for more than two weeks and thank you to the host country for their warm hospitality," he added.

## MARLINS

From page 24

lins coming out on top, 20-17.

It was an 11-11 tie at the end of the third inning, when Marlins pitching was finally able to shut down the Spartans until the sixth and seventh inning. The Marlins offense then went to work and was able to bring in six runs in the fourth to gain a 17-11 advantage.

Two more runs came by way of Marlins leadoff batter Walter Macaranas and Cartfield Sablan for an even bigger 19-11 lead in the sixth inning. The Spartans only put up one at the bottom of the inning, as the Marlins added one more in their last at-bat for a 20-12 game.

The Spartans' lumber woke up from their slumber a little too late as only five runs scored. It wasn't enough to

close the gap the Marlins had made and settled for their third loss of the season.

The Marlins' Sablan led the team with three hits, three RBIs, four runs, and two triples; and was complemented by Ton Benavente's two hits, two runs, and three RBIs. Meanwhile, the Spartans' Ton Pangelinan went four for six at bat, with four RBIs, and two doubles.

The Marlins secured their first win out of three losses, while the Spartans have yet to win a game.

In the Reds vs. Blue Jays game, the Reds won, 15-9.

Twelve runs were made by the Reds by the third inning while the Blue Jays only scored three. The Blue Jays would end up scoring eight more as the Reds pummeled Blue Jays pitching some more and scored three for a six-run deficit.

## DUENAS

From page 23

while Manibusan hit one.

Maratita has the most RBIs with nine; Bruce Norita hit

seven; Richard Quitugua has six; Manibusan and Shine Tenorio have five each; and Derek Aguon and Eric Palacios hit four each.

There are currently no home

runs in the league yet.

Duenas said during their game on Wednesday night that the last time he's played was in a league last 2019. Since then, he's been working

out and keeping healthy, and when he was asked to join this league, he was all for it. He said that he's happy and proud that he's the current pitching leader even at the age of 62.

## ELEVEN

From page 24

Taka Borja, Anthony Austria, and Akira Kadokura. Head coach is Bada Lee, while assisting him is Brandon Onopwy.

The Marianas Club Championship is made possible by the support of the EAFF with the aim of assisting in the promotion and development of the soccer program in the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. (PR)



By MARK RABAGO  
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EDITOR

# Spaeth, Barbo win age divisions in TOG



Barbo



Corotan



Mangalinao



Ruszala



Spaeth



Velasco

Robyn Spaeth and Willy Barbo won their respective age groups in the 105-kilometer Tour of Guam last Sunday.

Spaeth topped the women's 40-49—and 36th overall—with a time of 4:01:20.

Fellow former CNMI national triathlete Kathy Ruszala finished third in the same age group after clocking in at 4:42:58.

Barbo, meanwhile, proved once again that age is just a number by dominating the men's 60-69 after crossing the finish line in 4:18:01.

The CNMI actually swept the podium in the category with Ponciano Corotan and Nomer Mangalinao coming in second and third with times of 4:33:23 and 4:33:28, respectively. All three finished from 46 to 48th overall in the TOG.

Arvin Velasco, meanwhile, was the top CNMI finisher in the event after submitting a time of 3:32:22, good for 21st overall and second in the men's 30-39 age group.

Spaeth said taking on the TOG eight days after the 2023 Hell of the Marianas on Saipan was indeed a challenge.

"I was really nervous going into the TOG after competing in the HOM. I had a pretty good fall toward the end of the

HOM that left me a bit bruised, shaken, and nervous to ride, especially downhill or on wet roads. But once I got going, I tried to relax and enjoy the beauty that is Guam. But what I love most

about both the TOG and HOM are all of the riders I meet along the course. Everyone is supportive and encouraging, making for a fun race."

The Marianas High School teacher then thanked her family and biking group for giving her the opportunity to bike every week.

"I would also like to thank the Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation for asking me to be a part of the team this year. I am always thankful for the opportunity to represent the CNMI," added Spaeth.

Barbo, for his part, said it's always a good feeling to finish the TOG without having any trouble.

"The weather was pretty good. It's almost the same as the HOM. The hills and the terrain and the flat roads are pretty good we had a good rest before the Tour of Guam. It feels good also to win my age group and I would like to thank my friends and my family for always supporting me but most of all God for giving me the strength," he said.

Velasco said overall the TOG course was less punishing than the 2023 HOM.

"It's still hard especially being unfamiliar with the course, then there's part of the course that the road was not good and with a lot of head wind. But what makes it hard was doing it just a week after HOM. I dedicate my win to my family and to all Saipan cyclists. I'm also thanking the Lord for keeping us safe and guiding us," said the Commonwealth Health Center nurse.

Corotan said the TOG's course was very good and they were able to enjoy the nice weather during the race unlike the conditions during the HOM.

"I crashed at very sharp curve going down to [Marpi dumpsite] intersection due to rain and wet road during the HOM race. I'm dedicating the win to my wife, to all my co-bikers who joined this TOG, and of course to NMICF who supported and sponsored us to represent the CNMI to join this TOPG race."

The 65-year-old Hawaiian Rock Product employee said what actually made TOG difficult was the only one-week recovery after the HOM.

"On the first 75 kilometers of TOG I felt very strong and leading my CNMI co-bikers until I reached the second turn to the cross island road going

back to the finish line. From there, my legs cramped in every climb and most of the riders behind me caught me and overtook me. Thank God I still managed to pass those climbs and I finished the race. I was surprised and very excited that I came in second place in my age group. This is my first time in TOG and what I learned after the race is that I should have reserved my energy for the last 25km of the race."

Ruszala said doing TOG and HOM back-to-back was a test of physical and mental endurance. Luckily, she trained hard for both races.

"I'm a nervous nelly, but the training definitely helped. Recovery is quicker, legs are sore, and there's some mental struggle before and during, but I genuinely enjoyed the ride. By the end of the race, I'm already looking forward to the next one."

Ruszala also thanked her family and bike group for helping her conquer the twin bike races.

"I can practically hear Brad, Keoni, and Leilani in my mind cheering me on when I'm about to throw in the towel. Huge shoutout to the biking 'kuyas' always looking out for us, Saipan Bike Pro for handling my pre-race panic attacks, and assuring me my bike is good

to go. Big thanks to the volunteers, organizers, and sponsors—TOG, NMICF, NMITF, Triple J—for the support. Also our Sunday bike group, espe-

cially the incredible ladies who are a constant inspiration, with a special nod to Robyn, whose competitive spirit and skill blow me away every race," she said.

## MHS, MCS record wins in boys soccer

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

Marianas High School Dolphins lead the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Boys High School Soccer League 2023-2024 with two wins, while Mount Carmel School Knights

notched a win last Tuesday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The Dolphins slipped past Saipan International School Geckos, 3-2, while the Knights outgunned MHS JV, 6-2.

MHS had an early start with a shotgun goal by Wataru Kadokura in the 6th minute. SIS was pressured to tie it up and eventually found an opening toward the end of the first half off William Lee in the 35th minute.

The favor switched to the Geckos as just a couple minutes later, Moshe Sikkil fired the goal that took the lead. The Dolphins still had a few tricks up their cleats as later, Paul Lizama whizzed the tying goal in the 55th minute.

SIS tried to shut down MHS but Lizama had other plans as he found the net

again in the 66th minute—and this time MHS' defense held off SIS long enough to take the win as time ran out.

The Knights, on the other hand, had a field day with early goals by Earle San Nicolas and Markus Toves.

MHS JV's Ashroy Mallik replied in the

20th minute and made it a 1-2 game, but the Knights' Eun Hong added to their scoreboard for a two goal lead, 1-3.

Toves led MCS to a bigger spread just a couple minutes later and possession quickly teetered between both teams. MHS' Prince Espiritu managed to snag a goal in the 30th minute and cut the lead in half, 2-4.

However, MCS' lead ballooned later in the second half as Earl Lacandazo scored a goal and Toves wrapped up the game with a hat-trick in the 67th minute.

Saipan Southern High School and MHS JV played the last regular season game yesterday afternoon.

The championship rounds resume next year, Jan. 9, with the third-place game and finals set for Jan. 11.



## Duenas, Quitugua leaders in SBL Master's League

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER



As of Dec. 7, Marlins pitcher Ben Duenas is the pitching leader, while the Dodgers' Richard Quituga is the batting leader in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Master's League.

The 62-year-old Duenas is still kicking it as he leads nine other pitchers with a zero ERA, zero earned runs, seven hits, three innings pitched in one game appearance. Second is Pirates pitcher Dung Tenorio with also a zero ERA and ER, three hits, in three innings and one game played. Third is also a Pirates pitcher Pete Sablan with a 1.40 ERA, one



LEIGH GASES

The Marlins' 62-year-old pitcher Ben Duenas is the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Master's League leading pitcher as of Dec. 7, 2023.

ER, four hits, in five innings and one game pitched.

The pitcher with the most strikeouts is Kevin Kapileo with 16; then Sablan with seven; Clint Quitugua at five; Bill

Camacho and Dominic Hideo with four each; and Alvin Takai, Duenas, Tenorio, Greg Magofna, and Tony Flores with three a piece.

The batting leader is Rich-

ard Quitugua with a batting average of .714 from five hits in seven plate appearances. Second is the Pirates' Pete Tomokane with a .625 average from five of eight at-bat; and third is Pirates' Audie Maratita at .600, from six out of 10 at-bat.

The most runs scored is a nine-run tie between Derek Aguon and James Benavente; Glen Camacho and Tomokane share seven runs; and Maratita, Clint Quitugua, Mark Flores, and Sablan are tied with five each.

Maratita, Ed Manibusan, and Shine Tenorio share the most doubles with two each; while Cartfield Sablan, John Taitano, Pete Sablan, Pete Tomokane, and Richard Quitugua have one each.

Richard Quitugua also has the most triples with two,

See **DUENAS** on Page 22



NMIFA

Mount Carmel School's Markus Toves, left, goes up against a Marianas High School JV player during their game last Tuesday in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Boys High School Soccer League 2023-2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.





Giannis scores franchise-record 64 points to help Bucks beat Pacers.

PAGE 20

# Saipan Tribune Sports

Spaeth, Barbo win age divisions in TOG.

PAGE 23



24 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Tan: Honiara inspiration for future competitions

By MARK RABAGO  
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EDITOR

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan said Team CNMI's performance in the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands will serve as an inspiration for upcoming competitions.

"The number of NMI athletes and officials we were able to bring to the Solomon Islands and the solid showing that our team delivered in the 2023 Pacific Games will serve as an inspiration to us not just for our preparations and participation to next year's Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands, but for all



future regional and international competitions. These will inspire us to continuously seek for more support from the government, the private sector, and other stakeholders, for the overall development of NMI sports," he said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

He said the support of stakeholders is critical in NMSA's

efforts to provide high-standard and well-maintained facilities for athletes and the community to use for training, competitions, and related activities. It will also be helpful in equipping coaches/officials with knowledge and expertise in implementing various programs and training our athletes, especially the youth.

"To top it all, the strong support that NMI sports get

from all stakeholders goes back to the community, as we are able to encourage people to live an active and healthier lifestyle, open career and scholarship pathways for them, and develop leaders."

Tan also said the CNMI sending over 100 athletes and officials to Honiara came following the success of the 2022

See TAN on Page 22



LEIGH GASES

Team Marianas poses for a group photo after the opening ceremony of the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands last month.

## Eleven Tiger vs. Wings FC in Marianas Club Championship

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association and the Guam Football Association, with the support of the East Asian Football Federation, are holding the Marianas Club Championship 2023 this Saturday, featuring the champion teams of their respective men's league.

Game time is at 6pm at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville with the Mari-

anas Soccer League 1 champion Eleven Tiger Football Club taking on the visiting Wings Football Club, which ruled GFA's Budweiser Soccer League Premier Division.

Eleven Tiger reigned supreme in both the spring and fall 2023 seasons of the MSL 1. In the spring season finale, Eleven Tiger nosed out MP United, 2-1, behind the pair of goals from former NMI

national team player Sunjoon Tenorio. In the fall season, Eleven Tiger triumphed anew when it topped the double round-robin competition with an 8-2-0 win-draw-loss record.

Eleven Tiger FC will challenge Wings FC, which had an outstanding debut in the Budweiser Soccer League Premier Division by winning the championship in its first season in the division. Wings FC finished its season debut with a 10-0-2 win-draw-loss record, beating Stryk-

ers FC (9-0-3) for the coveted league championship.

Wings FC will be arriving on Saipan this Saturday morning for the evening match against Eleven Tiger. Wings will have a 16-player roster made up of Budweiser Soccer League Premier Division Golden Glove awardee Jacob Toves and Gold Boot award contenders Ivan Teheugoue and Yaw Boateng. Completing the visiting squad are players Beau Perez, Caleb Sablan, Donovan Moss, Justin

Li, Kai Pahl, Levi Buckwalter, Luciano Jameson, Nathan Nuwer, Nicholas Moore, Nicolas Yokota, Raito Atsuta, Shuntaro Suzuki, and Juan-Carlos Mungaray, head coach James Okuhama and assistant coach Duane Pahl.

Meanwhile, Tenorio will lead

Eleven Tiger and will be joined on the team by Tanapon Unsa, Anthony Bergancia, Jamin Elliot, R.J. Narvaez, Jonne Navarro, Saixian Bagsic, Jerald Aquino, Dane Hodges, Brandon Tenorio, Seho Baek, John Diego Masga, David Mafnas,

See ELEVEN on Page 22



NMIFA

Left photo, shows Eleven Tiger FC's Sunjoon Tenorio with ball possession during their game against TanHoldings FC in the Marianas Soccer League 1. Right photo has Wing FC's Yaw Boateng facing an Islander defender in their match in the Budweiser Soccer League Premier Division. Eleven Tiger and Wings FC will collide in the Marianas Club Championship this Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center.

## Marlins, Reds notch wins in Master's League

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER



The Marlins and Reds were graced with clear evening skies which led to a clear path to victory last

Wednesday and Tuesday in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Master's League at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The Marlins and the Spartans had an all-out slugfest that began in the first inning and lasted throughout with the Mar-

See MARLINS on Page 22



LEIGH GASES

The Marlins' Shine Tenorio at the plate during their 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Master's League game against the Spartans Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.